

Foreign Investment Review Agency

feel that subsequently we should be given more detailed information.

More recently we discussed the Enterprise Development Board. That is topical at this time because of our particular need to improve and support the industrial sector and the export drive.

Today we are discussing the Foreign Investment Review Agency. Why do I bring this up again when I have discussed it over many years? In fact, the same motion has appeared in previous Parliaments. Once again, it is because I am seeking information I am unable to get from the Government.

Now, I will be fair and put on the record, in case the Parliamentary Secretary does not have the time, that this information is not disclosed under the provisions of the Act. Now, Mr. Speaker, what worries me is that an agreement has been signed between Tate and Lyle and FIRA. The intent was that Tate and Lyle would divest itself on its interest in Redpath Sugar. It so happens that the conditions of that agreement have not yet been triggered. That is a perfectly logical explanation, but it brings into question the way FIRA operates and whether agreements such as this should be put in the public domain so we can have a better knowledge of the original intent. I suggest, as I have previously, that it certainly brings into question whether the original intent was not to ensure that the share price would be such that the parent company would get back a certain sum of money with the end result that whoever buys those shares will have to pay a higher price. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, that in all these representations, in looking for papers we are looking for information.

I do not want to be unreasonable. If the Government was to say it cannot answer this question because it is far too costly or because it will mean releasing secret information or something of that sort, I would not mind. But too often it is just a silent approach. We are not told, yet I do not believe we should even have to ask. I suggest that it would be a lot easier, particularly for Government backbenchers, to support Government policy if we were provided with the information which makes it easier for us to support Government policy.

In the Committee of which I am a member presently discussing Bill C-133, changes to the Superannuation Act, it would have been a lot easier for many of us on that Committee as Government Members to have produced arguments if we had all the information at the start which we now have finally obtained.

So in conclusion, on this last occasion to discuss documents, I plead with the Government, whether it be the present Government or succeeding governments, to try to help Members by producing information freely rather than making it necessary for us to point out the difficulties under which we operate when so little information is made readily available to us. I regret that this procedure will be terminated and I am using this last opportunity to plead with the Government to help the Members to do their job.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilgour): The Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) is not here. Is the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) speaking in his place?

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker. I might congratulate you on your elevation to the Chair. Since you are such a non-partisan member I am sure the decorum of the House will be very much improved, as the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. Rose) says.

Mr. Blaikie: Tongue in cheek.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I want to support motion No. 88 proposed by the Hon. Member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert). It is a motion to produce papers regarding a transaction undertaken by the Foreign Investment Review Agency. I do so in the spirit of trying to encourage the Government to make available more information on what goes on in this country. I believe this Government is far too secretive about the transactions of its departments, agencies and many of its Crown corporations.

I cannot help but agree with the Liberal backbencher who has just spoken when he says there is no reason for this kind of secrecy. All too often we see memos stamped "strictly confidential", and it is information that is not that sensitive, information which could be very useful, not just for Members of this House but for many citizens in many organizations in our country.

I also want to say a word or two at this time as to why it is important to have information about FIRA made public.

[Translation]

That is also important, Mr. Speaker, because we now have very high levels of unemployment in Canada. About one and one-half million Canadians are out of work. Our rate of inflation is also very high, and we may be one of the industrialized countries most severely affected by the recession. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that many problems are the same the world over, and that all European countries, and even Japan and the United States and other countries, are having a great many problems, but here in Canada, the recession is more severe because our situation is quite different. In fact, it is unique.

• (1720)

[English]

Of all the industrialized countries, we are the only one that has such a high incidence of foreign investment and foreign ownership.

I have read about the debates that took place at the end of the Second World War when Japan, France and Germany were virtually destroyed. The people in those countries decided that they were going to rebuild so that their own people would control the economy and make the important decisions. They are all strong countries today. They control the principal parts of their economy, they do a great deal of processing and manufacturing and they control their financial institutions. We