

Investment Canada Act

and we only have to look at the official figures provided by Statistics Canada last year, and we have the figures for the years 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1982 and 1983, I have them here, the table has been published . . . It is false to say that foreign companies do as much research and development as Canadian companies. Not much is done in Canada, and that is the problem. We would like to see more.

The Science Council has said we will have to tackle this problem and try to do at least the bare minimum of research and development to provide incentives and create jobs. It is absolutely false to say that foreign companies in Canada do more research and development, and I would ask the Hon. Member to remove her blinkers and take an objective look at the situation here in Canada.

The Hon. Member also claims that foreign companies do not export Canadian profits and funds abroad. Mr. Speaker, I submit that we would need only look into the Canadian entity, the business which multinational firms are doing in this country to realize that they are not here out of the kindness of their corporate hearts or because of our expertise, but to make money, something for which I do not blame them, but we, on the opposition side, would like to encourage Canadian, American and foreign firms to come here to create jobs which would benefit Canadians and possibly help us recover the control over our economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) has the floor.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): I thank you very much for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. I am somewhat bitter as I rise today because I had hoped that the government would have shown more patience, indulgence and comprehension during this debate on Bill C-15, and would have made possible for both government and opposition members to express their views concerning this important piece of legislation, the purpose of which is to establish an agency called Investment Canada.

[English]

Bill C-15 is indeed an important piece of legislation. It may be the only important piece of legislation which has been before the House in the last seven or eight months. We in the Official Opposition have considered Bill C-15 at second reading, committee stage, and for the short time we were able to debate it, at report stage. We have put forward our arguments and suggestions in a forthright and responsible manner. We see an impatient and sometimes arrogant Tory Government which is deaf to all improvements. We see a Tory Government using its huge majority to stifle debate and put a halt to the normal democratic process in the House by allowing only one more day of debate on third reading. This is the day. We have only one day to discuss third reading of a very important piece of legislation, Bill C-15. I regret that, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

In fact, what the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens) has said and done here clearly demonstrates that there is no room here for a constructive debate, that there is no room according to him for constructive criticism or for the submission of valid alternatives. I find this deplorable, Mr. Speaker. I truly regret what the Minister has done, what the Minister imposed on the House and what the Opposition has tried to improve. The Minister has decided not to continue. The majority obviously wins in a democracy, but it is still deplorable, and I, for one, suggest that the Minister would have been well advised to be present and listen a little more during the debate. Even his Parliamentary Secretary would have benefited by being present in the House to listen to what the opposition had to say.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, I feel somewhat bitter as I rise to deal with the third reading, because I think it is important that all those who have been involved at the various stages of debate on this bill . . . I think it is of paramount importance to let Canadians know that the Liberal Party of which I am a member, the Official Opposition which has tried to improve this bill, is not against foreign investments. Quite the contrary! We are and will continue to be in favour of foreign investments, and to work very hard to persuade international financiers to consider Canada and to invest in our country. What we reject and will continue to fight against is foreign control over our economy.

● (1530)

In my opinion, there is not a single Canadian who does not understand that if we want to take our rightful place in this world, in this industrialized and, in many cases, post-industrialized world, if we want to take our rightful place on this planet, it is absolutely essential that we first gain control of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that Bill C-15 will do nothing to help us achieve this objective. This Government, which is seemingly rudderless and which abdicates any form of leadership in an area such as investment so important for job creation, has imposed closure, and told us that, no, it does not want to allow a proper and thorough screening of foreign investments and prefers to put its confidence in businessmen, and to say: Come, Canada is for sale. Mr. Speaker, we say that this is not the right thing to do. What we must do, and let us hope that this Government will see the light, is not only to promote foreign investments, but also to ensure that such investments are in the best interests of Canadians.

In an area as important as foreign investment, the Tory Government is telling us: Let us trust foreign investors; it is not up to us to ensure that their investments will benefit Canada! I deplore such an attitude, Mr. Speaker, which lost us technologies and skills in the past, for instance in the famous AVRO case, where an aeronautical company closed down