

Investment Canada Act

interest to do so. It will close the mine and therefore close the town.

If the people of that town, whether it is the business people, the Chamber of Commerce, the union or its citizens, had been privy to the information about the status of the mine throughout that decision-making process, and if they could have participated and influenced the corporate decisions, they would not be experiencing the frustration and anguish they suffer now and will suffer for much longer.

Another Member of this House said it much better than I. Let me quote from *Hansard*, June 22, 1978, page 6686, in a debate about freedom of information. Freedom of information is really what we are talking about here. The Hon. Member was the late Hon. Walter Baker. He said:

We need freedom of information legislation for more than the reason commonly given, namely, that people are entitled to information gathered by public servants at public expense. That in itself is not sufficient reason, in my mind, to justify the complications which we may create as a result of such a bill. The real reason lies behind the basic theory and purpose of democratic government. Democracy thrives on the competition of ideas, argument, criticism and visions of the future. It depends not only on the electoral and parliamentary competition of political parties, but on the contribution of other voices in society acting from altruistic or selfish motives. As a parliamentary democracy we encourage organized probing of government actions through the formal structures of the House of Commons. As a pluralistic society we believe in the value of those organizations referred to as pressure groups.

This not only applies to government, it applies to companies which, by their very nature, can positively or negatively develop a community, can give life to a community or destroy it. People who live in communities in which there is foreign investment have a right to know what is going on. They have a right to know if certain rules have been established in terms of job creation or environmental controls. Perhaps there was an agreement to allow for a decline in permanent job positions in those communities over a certain number of years.

Individuals in those communities have a right to know what is happening. This may mean the disclosure of financial statements and minutes of the board of directors. It may mean that the community should have one of its citizens sitting on the board to help participate in those decisions. I am amazed that the Government does not want to accept the philosophy of access to information. Clearly it is desperately needed and should be supported. I urge Hon. Members to change their minds and support it.

● (1530)

In my final moment I should like to offer a personal comment to the Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin). I see that he is in the House, and I want to assure him that we are coming back, even though the Thunder Bay Twins are down three to one.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I just want to let the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan (Mr. Angus) know—and following the rule of relevancy—that one thing about the people of Newfoundland is that we believe in being very impressive in making a point. Of course the Corner Brook Royals are being impressive in

making a point. We do not believe in slaughtering the opposition; we let them have a game, at least. The people of Thunder Bay and the people of Corner Brook are hanging on to every word which my colleague and I utter. The hockey teams in his riding and mine are having it out over the Allen Cup right now.

I rise in support of Motion No. 8 because it goes to the heart of Bill C-15. This Bill takes the Foreign Investment Review Agency and turns it into something called, for propaganda purposes, Investment Canada. Hon. Members opposite stand in the House and say that they believe in free enterprise, the free market, supply and demand, and capitalism, but no one has asked them whether they believe in the people of Canada, the communities in which they live or the way in which they live. With a bill which allows foreign capital to come into the country and any investment under \$5 million to be made without any scrutiny, without any assessment or without any thought as to whether or not the investment is good or bad, we open up a very dangerous can of worms.

There are three fishermen sitting in the visitors' gallery today from the great northern peninsula of Newfoundland. They are here trying to get the Government of Canada to assist them in maximizing the potential of the fishery on the great northern peninsula. Right now there is a shotgun, splinter approach to the development of that fishery. They come from an area where unemployment in the best of times is 35 per cent to 40 per cent and where during the off-season it is 60 per cent to 70 per cent. They have a rich resource—cod, scallops, shrimp, herring and all kinds of roe. They want a development plan to make that region the prosperous area it can be. Why isn't it, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Because you guys were in power for the last 20 years, that is why.

Mr. Tobin: It is not for that reason. It is because in the northern region unbridled free enterprise does not deal with the reality of northern conditions. That is why. It is not prosperous because companies have come to the North with its rich resource to cherry pick. They have taken the very best resources or the very best stocks for themselves and shipped them off the north coast for processing in Boston or somewhere and have left the rest for the Government to run. That is unbridled free enterprise in that kind of environment.

[Translation]

Mrs. Tardif (Charlesbourg): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order please. The Hon. Member for Charlesbourg (Mrs. B. Tardif), on a point of order.

Mrs. Tardif (Charlesbourg): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Chair to examine the relevance of what the Hon. Member is saying.