

while we used it well and we grew as a nation from it, we also paid a higher price than we had to.

I became a Member of Parliament shortly after an intensive review began by the Government of the nature of foreign investment in our country and the question of whether foreign review could be controlled or directed in a way which would still encourage it to come to Canada but in a way that would provide more benefits to Canadians and still be worth-while from the point of view of the foreign investor than had been the case in the past. The Foreign Investment Review Agency was established in that spirit. It is bureaucratic by nature. It is an agency which reviews the plans of business and negotiates with business interests.

Naturally, there may be business interests which would prefer not to have foreign investment review at all. However, on the other hand, any multi-national firm in the world market is aware that almost every country in the world has foreign investment review. Even the United States has it in one way or another. The idea that multi-nationals or others interested in investing in Canada would be deterred by that bureaucratic step was never really proven. I am not satisfied today that any serious business proposition which had wanted to come to Canada would have been deterred by the kind of foreign investment review established by the former Government and in effect in Canada. In fact, if anything, one might have seen a continuation. In fact, there was a continuation of foreign investment in Canada. For all the criticism made of foreign investment review, it appeared to me that most of it was political, most of it was partisan, and most of it was done to design part of the election campaign of the Progressive Conservative Party in the course of the last election.

What has to be remembered in deciding whether the Foreign Investment Review Agency is really the obstacle which the Government says it is is that the Government controls it now. The Foreign Investment Review Agency is an instrument of the Government of the day. It eventually determines whether investments are to be approved. So the argument that we have to proceed here and that we have to collapse this debate because otherwise FIRA will continue inhibiting investment in the country, is wrong on two grounds. It does not inhibit investment and it is controlled by the Government, in effect the final say is at the Cabinet table. On that score the Government is not able to convince the House that any kind of limit, especially the two-hour limit it is seeking to impose on us today, is justified.

A second reason which might be advanced to justify imposing closure today is that this is about the only initiative which the Government has. If we look at virtually all the other legislation on the Order Paper, the other legislation that has gone forward, it is either legislation of a straightforward housekeeping nature or it is legislation that was on the Order Paper when the election was called. I am thinking of all the Bills in the justice area, in particular the one with which I am most familiar. These were initiatives, for the most part, which were well under way when the election was called. The one thing we can say about Bill C-15, the Bill to establish Invest-

Time Allocation

ment Canada, is that it is the legislative program of the Government of Canada today. To my way of thinking that in itself does not justify forcing the Bill through the House any faster than it would be carried by the normal parliamentary process. If the argument is that the Government wants to move forward and put its stamp on the public administration of Canada by bringing forward its first real Bill and getting it enacted in legislation, I do not think it washes as an argument. I reject it, and I consider on that ground as well that there is no justification for bringing in closure or time allocation to force the House to settle the Bill now.

The third argument which was often used in the past when time allocation was brought forward by former Governments was that there was a heavy legislative backlog, that there was a lot of legislation waiting on the Order Paper to move ahead, and that the Bill before the House, although important, it would be argued, needed to be dealt with so that we could get on with other business. Again, if we look at the Order Paper and at the legislative timetable of the Government, there is nothing else which has to be brought forward on an urgent basis to be considered now. I know our House Leader would be willing to sit down with the Government House Leader, if it were a question of finding time for the rest of the Government's pitifully short legislative program, to permit us to do that according to the Government's timetable and get back to this Bill. I think that kind of agreement could be worked out. On this third ground there is no reason demonstrated for imposing time allocation now. We do not know with what the Government will want to fill the legislative timetable or the time of the House when we have finished consideration of this Bill. In fact, last week and the week before we had something like six days, nearly one after the other, dedicated to opposition business because there was no government legislative business other than this Bill to move forward on. Why can we not give it all the time it requires?

In closing, I want to point out that this is a very important subject. It is not a subject which should be dealt with by time allocation. The way in which foreign investment is to continue in Canada, a country which requires a great deal of foreign investment, is a very important subject, not one which should be wrapped up in the course of a two-hour debate. We should have time to explore all aspects of it. The Government should take the time to try to bring forward the evidence, if there is any other than the anecdotal statements of some businessmen around the world who oppose any kind of government intervention or participation in the activities of an economy. I know the Government can obtain a lot of evidence like that. There are various types of businessmen around who will come forward and say that they would rather not have to deal with Government than deal with Government. However, that is not real proof that the economic development of this country has suffered because of FIRA. We think the case can be made on the other side. The records are there in every FIRA application which went ahead of the kinds of concessions and commitments that were made by foreign investors to ensure that the Canadian economy and the Canadian people would be the