

Investment Canada Act

that may have an impact on their ridings? That is the purpose of these amendments. Our NDP colleague should be pleased we are supporting his amendment, but he is still complaining. I think he will always be dissatisfied, and I am sure the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) will agree.

Mr. Gauthier: I certainly do.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, my point is that these amendments are like virtue and motherhood. Who could be against information? Who can begrudge the public the right to be informed? I am sure the only people . . . I am sure the members of the public who are here would like to be informed if their jobs were at stake. And if they went to see their Member, at least he would be able to give them information. However, for the time being, the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion is being given a free rein.

I see the Hon. Member for Drummond (Mr. Guilbault) and I am sure he does not want to give the Minister a free rein. He is much too worried about what is going to happen in textiles, clothing and footwear to be willing to give the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion a free rein. I know the Hon. Member has good judgment and that he will vote in favour of this amendment, because its purpose is to keep him informed of decisions that affect his riding, his workers and his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, that is the point I would make, in urging our friends opposite to wake up. I realize that the telegram of congratulations they received from the Prime Minister included the words: Keep quiet! But Mr. Speaker, that was six months ago. There is a time for congratulatory telegrams, the day after the election, and there is a time for decision, and I think they should understand that. I hope they are going to forget the order they received from the Prime Minister's Office, and that now, they will rise in the House. Our friends in the gallery must be very upset to see there is not a single Conservative Member rising today.

An Hon. Member: Velcro lips, all of them!

Mr. Lapierre: Imagine! They call them Velcro lips, Mr. Speaker! I am sure the Canadian public is astonished to see no one is rising to support all these amendments that have the support of the public. They are not even rising to speak against them. That just shows how short they are of arguments. I would invite our hon. friends opposite to tell us this afternoon why they are against the public's right to be informed. Why do they want all these secret operations with foreign investors to go on in the office of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion? I would not trust him for a minute, Mr. Speaker. And I am convinced that my constituents would be inadequately served if it were strictly a decision of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion.

I see the Minister of State for Small Businesses (Mr. Bissonnette), the translator of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and his factotum, as my colleague the

Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) would call him . . . he is not aware of the decisions, because Cabinet is not even consulted. It will be strictly the responsibility of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion who will decide as it may please him. His Parliamentary Secretary (Mrs. B. Tardif) who is here to support the Bill is not aware of the decisions either. The whole process will take place in an atmosphere of secrecy, and that is what we want to prevent. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you support entirely the principle of public disclosure. Because you are a wise man, you would not like to be taken for a ride, something which is likely to happen to us.

I urge you, therefore, Mr. Speaker, to use all your influence to persuade our hon. friends opposite to wake up and support this amendment, failing which they might be very sorry when they see plants in their own ridings closing down following their take-over by foreign interests.

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for the Hon. Member for Shefford (Mr. Lapierre) and I welcome his support for the principles of this Bill. I note the fact—and this is why I interrupted him—that when the Liberal Party was in office it was responsible for FIRA, and FIRA's restrictions concerning information to the public were similar to those contained in Bill C-15 now under consideration. That is precisely why we want some changes and have introduced amendments. I gratefully accept the support of the Liberal Party. Unfortunately, however, when that Party was in office it could have brought in radical changes so as to share information on the conditions and agreements made with companies investing in Canada, but it did not introduce the necessary legislative amendments with a view to opening the books to a wider audience than the restricted circle of officials of the Minister responsible for the administration of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments proposed by this Party highlight the fact that the process advocated in Bill C-15 is shrouded in secrecy. To put it another way, a company prepared to invest in Canada may very well have to guarantee to the Government that its investment project will be of benefit to Canada, but such corporate guarantees will never be revealed and made public. Therefore, the only control measure proposed by the Government in that case is what might be termed administrative accountability, or accountability to public employees. It will therefore be left to the discretion of Investment Canada administrative staff to decide whether we should know—two, three or even five years down the road—if a company has lived up to its guarantees once the investment has been made.

That is expecting quite a lot from them, Mr. Speaker, because they are a busy crew with all kinds of things to do. All the more so because it is difficult to interpret today the full