

ership, the very balance of Canadian investment, and it is along those lines that we are debating that very delicate issue.

Mr. Speaker, concerning labour rights, again the Hon. Member for Gatineau has said: "Don't you worry, they are protected by the Charter of Rights. Well, I would urge her to read the Charter once again and see exactly where labour rights are protected in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. I appreciate that she was not yet on the political scene, though unwittingly when the Charter of Rights was adopted, but I would remind her that the Labour Code has nothing to do with constitutional law.

The Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) raised some very important points concerning the Minister's role. I think it is important that all of us should know what will be the responsibility of the Minister in charge of the agency. Will he assign political guidelines to the agency, or is the latter some kind of a beast that will be wandering about at the discretion of its officials? The impression now is that the Minister wants to be in charge but he is quite intent not to say so in the Act, and this will prevent the House of Commons from assessing the Minister's performance in the administration of the Act.

I think it is important for us to know what criteria the Minister will use, because we realize—especially considering the Minister responsible for the legislation today—that these criteria are not always necessarily objective, and that is why we want to give him some parameters. We want to give him parameters so that the Minister will not strictly act according to his own discretion, as he is doing in a number of cases that are of concern to us here.

I hope the Minister will be given some parameters, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with a case that is not directly concerned with foreign investment, but I am sure the Member for Gatineau (Mrs. Mailly) would do well to prepare some parameters for him when he starts dealing with Pétromont, for instance. I really think she should, because, Mr. Speaker, although the Minister is probably acting in good faith, we have noticed that Regional Economic Development, and especially the development of the most disadvantaged regions, is not necessarily a matter on which he is staking his reputation as a politician. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that as far as the Investment Canada Bill is concerned, the Minister has a few guidelines so he will know what to do with this legislation. I think it is important to know that the Minister will be giving the main policy direction. We have the conviction that decisions made from Toronto are not necessarily, I say not necessarily, good for the whole country. I am convinced that the Toronto perspective may be useful, but we would like a more pan-Canadian perspective.

I think that when we consider other aspects of my hon. colleague's amendment, it is not so unreasonable to ask the Minister to find other potential buyers who are Canadians. I thought this legislation was called "an Act respecting invest-

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ment in Canada", and before seeking out foreign investors to, for instance, take over Canadian companies, we want to oblige the Minister to look around and see if any Canadian citizens are interested in buying the company, and that, Mr. Speaker, is the same principle we apply to immigration. Hon. Members are aware that before we can give a non-Canadian a work permit, the job opening is posted, and we make sure that any Canadians qualified for the position are given a chance to apply before the position is opened to a non-Canadian. We want to apply exactly the same principle to investment and ensure that Canadians are considered first. I fail to see why my colleagues opposite would have any objection to such a worthy principle, Mr. Speaker.

Research is another aspect mentioned in the amendments proposed by my hon. colleague. He wants to set guidelines for the Minister responsible for the agency, once and for all, to ensure that research on domestic and international investments is done officially, in accordance with certain criteria, to ensure that the Minister does not just set this aside and decide that as far as he is concerned, the research has been done. For instance, he examines his conscience, and hurrah, we accept our friends from Chevron, and we approve applications by other friends for taking over Canadian companies. Mr. Speaker, as for the requirement to table the results in the House of Commons, I think we all need this research, to find out whether the Minister took the advice he was given.

Mr. Speaker, we have all been gagged in this debate, and unfortunately, I have only ten minutes, otherwise I could have spent all afternoon describing some horrifying cases of foreign investment that were to the disadvantage of Canadians and I am sure that includes some Canadians in the riding of Gatineau and during the next minutes I will be allowed, I will have an opportunity to name a few, despite the fact that this Government, with its tyrannical majority, would keep us from speaking. I have to stop for the time being, but I will be back to this later on, Mr. Speaker.

● (1250)

[*English*]

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I am glad of the opportunity to speak on this group of amendments because the Bill does not give the Minister the kind of direction he should have. They allow him to approach the whole question of investment without any suggestion that he has some responsibility to Canadian investors. Clause 5 seems to suggest that the Minister has the responsibility of bringing in foreign investment as though it were preferable to Canadian investment. The clause does refer to assisting Canadian businessmen to exploit opportunities for investment and technological advancement, and they are very good words. But this clause and the whole Bill seem to point in a different direction. Therefore, the series of amendments which the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party have put before this House and in committee are an attempt to assist the Government in giving the Minister some direction to make sure that Canadian