

That is the reason why I say again that it is not only by passing legislation and by criticizing any government which failed to achieve that objective, but by teaching individuals and by giving them the necessary pride that we will cause Canadians to invest in Canadian corporations.

• (1620)

I am also aware of the efforts of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. For a few years, this department has been spending millions if not billions of dollars. Did we ever think, for instance, of giving many more benefits to the really Canadian enterprise than to another one? Here again, there might be a few comments to make about what financial policy the government could adopt to help Canadian companies through the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, not necessarily to penalize foreign businessmen but rather to encourage Canadians. I suggest that no government could be admonished for having helped Canadian-owned businesses. I think that this suggestion would deserve the government's consideration.

If we are to speak seriously about taking over our economy and ensure above all that henceforth it will remain in the hands of Canadians, I suggest it is very important to make proposals and think of getting the contribution of Canadians.

I thought, Mr. Speaker, that it might be possible for the government to consider, for instance, withholding a percentage of Canadian wages. Perhaps this measure would not be very welcome, but the Canadian people would serve their own interests in so far as they would be compelled to do so. They are quite willing to be independent, they want to take all kinds of decisions, but they are not really prepared to endure the sacrifices all this involves. Therefore, I wonder whether the government should not decide to establish a bank designed specially to maintain our industries and establish new ones, something which would be particularly useful to our university graduates, to the experts we are now developing thanks to millions of dollars but who cannot find a job. At present, they become unemployed people with Phd's. The problem of university students is not one of skills—because they have skills—but of finance. Unfortunately, they do not have the necessary capital which would enable them to create new industries or to administer. In short, they do not have the necessary financial resources enabling a group to build something which would definitely be Canadian owned.

If we thought for instance of retaining one per cent of each Canadian's wages, it would represent millions of dollars in less than a week and much more at the end of the year. This money would be administered by the government and would not bring in a cent of interest to Canadians but it would be returned to the worker without interest 25, 30 or 40 years later; he would however have been forced to take part in the so-called conservation of our economy and in the development of the takeover of our industries. He would have been forced to it, Mr. Speaker.

This is a solution to consider even if it is unpopular at the outset. It will really be profitable for Canada inasmuch as the worker will be forced to a certain extent. He

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will be proud to bring into being the objective aimed at in Bill C-132 by creating new industries, by offering jobs, which will be definitely useful to future generations. It would be a way for the government to implement a measure which would give Canadians a better chance to achieve this objective, to keep the ownership of their economy. The economy will be made by Canadians, perhaps in a coercive way. But, I think it will be necessary to remind them that economic freedom in this country, whether we like it or not, will have to be paid for, and I think it would be an outstanding way to get it.

[English]

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I should think that this debate is largely a rerun of the one we had last session; the bill has added to it only the clause dealing with new business. The subject of foreign ownership is one that has occupied Canadians for the last few years. Foreign investment has been viewed by many of our present economic nationalists as being something that has been foisted on us, and that much foreign investment has been deliberately designed to weaken Canada's position as an independent power. Yet I think we have to be reminded that Canadians actively sought foreign investment as a means to develop our industries and our resources for the benefit of our people. Canada has one of the most advanced, if not the most advanced, welfare structures in the world. We live in a cold climate, and without a very great level of economic activity and investment from outside this country it is extremely difficult to see how our social advancement could have been achieved without the help of foreign capital.

There are those who say that the over-all costs of foreign ownership and control are far outweighed by the benefits in the long run, while there are others who suggest that the costs and benefits are too close for a comfortable position on either side. There is the obvious question as to whether the rate of Canadian economic growth would have been significantly lower if foreign investment had not taken place at the rate it did. I do not think that there is any doubt, at least in certain parts of the country, that our resource industries would have been markedly reduced if there had been no foreign investment.

Let us take the example of the Alberta oil and gas industry. In the western provinces there are about six million people. Of these, it is reliably estimated that one million are dependent on the oil industry for their livelihood. And yet the oil and gas industry has been almost wholly developed by United States capital, with a small input of western Canadian capital. There was on the whole, up until very recently, just not the capital resources available in Canada to develop the oil and gas industry. Without this influx of foreign capital, it seems unlikely that the oil and gas industry would have been able to generate enough capital to balance Canadian imports with exports. Perhaps more amenable tax laws would have fostered a greater investment by Canadians in the industry. So, Mr. Speaker, whatever else we may think or complain about, we have as a nation been actively promoting foreign investment up until the present time.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, Canadians react curiously whenever conditions arise that will injure this flow of foreign investment. The United States DISC program is