

rationalize it by saying that anybody is entitled to speak to the Government of Canada—any Canadian certainly.

So that at least one of the individuals, one of the commissioners for FIRA, had some second thoughts about the amount of secrecy which existed under the first legislation. Since the Government has chosen to open up the legislation to some extent; to dramatically reduce the mandate of the old FIRA legislation, and to loosen things up in the Investment Canada Bill we have before us, it is still very important, and I think consistent with the many speeches and protestations from the former Opposition, now Government, that we have introduced into this Bill the kinds of access to freedom of information and extra information which these amendments propose. We would assume that government members would, therefore, support it.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this further opportunity to take part in a debate that is vital to the future of Canada's economic well-being. I see a group of young people here in our visitors gallery, and I imagine that, like me, they must realize that we have here in front of us a Government that is losing its grip. We are considering a very important Bill, and out of a majority of 211 Members, only a handful of Members are here in the House to listen to what the Opposition has to say about this important legislation. They have 40 Ministers, the biggest Cabinet in this country's history, Mr. Speaker, and—

[*English*]

**Mr. Gormley:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member may be belabouring the Bill unnecessarily, but I believe he is also belabouring the Standing Order which would prohibit reference to the presence or absence of other Hon. Members.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Yes, I have to agree with the Hon. Member. I would hope that the Hon. Member, who has been in the chamber for a few years, would realize that he should not talk about Hon. Members being present or absent from the chamber. I am sure that he will now get back to the amendment.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi).

**Mr. Rossi:** Mr. Speaker, I hope the Chair will consider the time taken by our hon. friend on the Government side and will add it to ours.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The Hon. Member for Shefford (Mr. Lapierre).

**Mr. Lapierre:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Instead of getting upset, I think our hon. neighbour should count how many of his colleagues are present, because sometimes they cannot even keep a full quorum in this House. Instead of getting upset about the fact that I was commenting on absences, the Hon. Member ought to make sure there are at least enough Mem-

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bers present to make a quorum. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to see the Minister who just woke up, because I hope he is going to listen and realize that the Bill definitely needs the amendments proposed by Opposition Members.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking to have the information made public. That is not unreasonable. In fact, we are asking this for the sake of our Progressive Conservative colleagues, because we know that when decisions are made, as was the case recently, and they do not have to look so smug, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the Minister of State for Small Businesses (Mr. Bissonnette) was never consulted when the time came to appoint Mr. Sherman to the CRTC, because otherwise he would have objected, just as the Minister of Public Works (Mr. La Salle) was never consulted, and just as the president of the Quebec caucus was never consulted. So it is quite obvious that they are unhappy about having things imposed on them, and I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Drummond (Mr. Guilbault), for instance, would like to be notified if a company in his riding was about to be sold to foreign interests. I think it would be important for the Hon. Member for Drummond to know whether the change in ownership could affect employment in that particular plant in his riding, and whether it was going to bring in new technology, or would the Hon. Member prefer to let the Minister responsible for the agency organize it all in secret?

● (1530)

Mr. Speaker, to the other Members of this House I have this to say: for once, they have a chance to demand that the Government be accountable, and that is why these amendments are before the House. The point is that Members would know that, if feasibility studies are made, for instance, on take-over proposals, the results of those studies would be available to them, as they would be to all Canadians. A person would have to be trusting in the extreme to leave the fate of our constituents in the hands of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens).

**Mr. Cassidy:** You have secrets about the Liberals and we have secrets about the Conservatives.

**Mr. Lapierre:** Mr. Speaker, if Donald Duck over there could keep quiet . . . Our NDP friend would be better off canvassing in his riding next door instead of talking nonsense here in the House.

One point I want to make is that the amendments before the House will make it possible for Hon. Members and for the Canadian public to know what is going on with respect to foreign investment. We are not asking for the moon. All we ask is to be informed. We want workers who fear their plant will close down because it was taken over by an American competitor to be informed. I do not see why our friends opposite object to that. Have they become so obsessed with secrecy that they do not even want to know about decisions