

Investment Canada Act

We look at the facts and try to assess what we are doing wrong and attempt to correct it. I believe that is useful. It is something for which the people of Canada pay us to do. On the fringes, occasionally it is useful to indulge in an ideological exchange. Some day I might have a debate about why, in my basic commitments, I would call myself a socialist, but we are not talking about that today. We are talking about practical pieces of legislation. To debate that in a pragmatic, careful and serious manner is important to the future of Canada. We should not be ideological about it. We should not let our ideological baggage shape what we do. We should let reality shape what we do.

The Hon. Member suggested that parliamentary traditions were important to understand. I agree. Certainly, the Government was elected on the basis of a great many promises last summer. Most of those promises have been broken. God knows why the Government did not break this promise, as I would have welcomed that. The point is that parliamentary tradition permits a full presentation of alternate points of view. As well, it permits the capacity for the ordinary people of Canada to have some input. What bothered me most about the way this was done was that 28 witnesses from across this country wanted to testify and they were prevented from doing so by the Conservative majority who railroaded this Bill through.

● (1240)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The period for questions and comments has now expired. We shall resume debate.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claudy Mailly (Gatineau): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to dwell on the negative side and on the past like the Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor (Mr. Langdon). Like the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens), I see myself as a Member for today and tomorrow, and I therefore prefer to concentrate on the very positive aspects of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have been listening carefully to Opposition Members on this Bill. They painted such a terrifying picture of the harm done by foreign investment that I found it hard to believe they were merely doing it out of partisanship or some kind of phobia. I went around my riding to find out for myself what the facts were about foreign ownership in Gatineau. I found, Mr. Speaker, that, contrary to what the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party Opposition have been saying, foreign companies established in Gatineau since the beginning of this century and new companies added since then tend to re-invest in their facilities as much as Canadians do. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, they do as much as, and in some cases even more than, some Canadian companies do for research and development. They do not abruptly close down unprofitable plants in the riding, they do not export tremendous sums of money to their own country, thereby harming our currency, and they have not managed to impose any regulations that would affect our sovereignty or economic growth.

On the contrary, they are very responsible members of our community.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, they are not restricting Canadian branches to the domestic market, excluding them from markets in their own country or anywhere else in the world. Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention a specific example. That example is ERCO, a branch of Albright & Wilson Ltd., the United Kingdom's second largest producer of chemical products. This company's products are manufactured in seventeen countries and distributed throughout the world. Albright & Wilson Ltd. is part of Tenneco Inc., a larger U.S. industrial conglomerate whose activities include oil, gas pipelines, chemical products, shipbuilding and insurance. In fact, ERCO is one of those multinationals which our colleagues opposite are so fond of criticizing. ERCO, Mr. Speaker, started in 1887 and the town of Buckingham on the Lièvre River. At first, the plant produced elemental phosphorus for the Canadian match industry. Elemental phosphorus was obtained from locally mined apatite and extracted using electric power generated by the falls of the Lièvre River. Until 1950, ERCO's production operations were restricted to Buckingham, the site of its first plant. Today, 35 years later, ERCO Industries has five branches, including the Buckingham plant. It is one of the largest Canadian companies with annual sales of \$214 million. Mr. Speaker, ERCO is the sole Canadian producer of elemental phosphorus and industrial phosphate, and the largest producer of sodium chlorate in the world. Its products are sold both domestically and internationally. The company even has a warehouse in the United States to supply the American market. If we look at the sales figures, 61 per cent of sales are in Canada, 33 per cent in the United States and 6 per cent elsewhere.

As for research and development, ERCO has had its own separate services and its research and development centre for 30 years. It is located in Toronto, Ontario, and employs twelve experts, six of whom are Ph.D.s, and ten technicians and office staff. They also have a technical library, and the company spends nearly \$2 million annually on these research services.

● (1250)

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, each plant has a group responsible for development which reports to the plant's management. Speaking of management, Mr. Speaker, ERCO is fully Canadian, from the president down to the employees, and has been for 25 years. All decisions are made in Canada, including the decision to re-invest half of the profits in modernizing and expanding the plant, which was started ten years ago. Mr. Speaker, the situation differs completely from the image we have been given of foreign companies.

Mr. Speaker, I could name a few more: CIP, for instance, which was a U.S.-owned company and now belongs to Canadians, not because we wanted to Canadianize it for ideological reason but because it was so well managed that it had become