

Foreign Investment Review

that way, but we will be looking forward to the proposals of the minister in this respect.

• (1530)

As the constitution committee pointed out in the last chapter of its report to parliament last March, there is a definite need in Canada for the development and indeed the deliberate cultivation of a positive nationalism. We can so easily change into a country which is fragmented in spirit. We need to make special efforts to overcome our regionalism. Such regionalism is indigenous to our country by reason of its geography, its distances, its languages, its culture and its variety. The variety is something I think all of us in this House would like to see preserved. At the same time, because of the very fact that it exists, with a potential for divisiveness, we must be especially conscious of the need to cultivate a positive nationalism. As I see it, a positive nationalism is vital to our future and this bill is vital to the development of a positive nationalism.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Peel South): Mr. Speaker, we were told after the October 30 general election that this government had learned some lessons. It surprises me therefore that the government should have the nerve to introduce the same poor bill, with minor alterations—changes which merely add to the preamble in respect of the establishment of new businesses in Canada by certain persons. All I can say about this is fiddle-de-dee. It is the same inept bill. It was inept then and it is inept now. It is amazing to realize, in view of the fact the party to the left of us was so anti-Bill C-201 last year what the bedroom can do to change a party's attitudes and principles. What was considered bad last year is now praised by the party to the left. No one may criticize the preamble to this piece of legislation. The problem is that this bill embodies a philosophy which does nothing for business and does nothing for Canadians. It is a bill which starts off by saying "thou shalt not."

Clause 2 of the bill still contains the same subjective analysis problems. There are no real criteria concerning what will be good for the development of Canada. It still refers to percentages of shareholdings. Indeed truly real Canadian companies are suddenly deemed to be foreign companies just because 25 per cent of their shares lie in other countries, or because in some cases one foreign shareholder holds 5 per cent of the shares. This is no way to deal with Canadians. In many cases, the companies now deemed by this bill to be foreign are really Canadian companies.

I was surprised that the minister, having mentioned the positive steps he intended to take, did not completely rehash this measure and provide as a minimum requirement that at least the majority of the directors be Canadians and that at least Canadian talent be represented in senior management. We still see the incension of the 90-day review. We still see the possibility of the review carrying on forever. We still have the provision under which, should the minister think I intend to sell a business or that perhaps you, Mr. Speaker, intend to sell a business to foreigners, he can send in his troops to investigate us just because he has reasonable grounds to believe such a sale is contemplated. That is the kind of thing we object

[Mr. MacGuigan.]

to. It is not necessary. It is not the kind of thing which develops a positive Canadian nationalism.

This bill will develop a huge bureaucracy to inquire into investment decisions which people make. The whole question of foreign review has been investigated by some provinces. In the province of Ontario a standing committee of the legislature has been sitting since this time last year looking into the whole problem of foreign ownership and the way in which it affects our culture and our business activities, as well as the development of our nation. That committee has held several hearings, including hearings held right here in Ottawa. When Bill C-201 came before this House and the standing committee last year, nine days were devoted to hearings—they were not nine full days because each session lasts for only an hour and a half.

I suggest that if this bill passes second reading—and there are grave doubts about that—the whole issue of foreign ownership should be reviewed by a House committee. We must call in experts from industry and the market. We must call in people from the provinces, We must hear from the banks, the life insurance companies and the pension funds. We must go to specific industries and find out whether the activities undertaken as a result of this bill will hurt rather than help in the development of Canada particularly with respect to oil and gas, mining, the auto industry, transportation, printing, publications and communications. It is important that we look at these things because the bill means that if a company has gross assets or \$250,000 or if a small-town auto dealer has help from Motor Holdings, even though he lives in that small town and is a Canadian, his company is deemed by this bill to be a foreign corporation. This is the type of thing which must be studied to determine whether it contributes to a better Canada, contributes to the development of the country and as well provides for Canadian ownership.

The practice of my party in debates this session has been for individual speakers to concentrate on parts of the Progressive Conservative program and so present our program to the people of Canada and to the members of the House. Today I want to talk about taxes, the tax policies of this government and how those tax policies affect foreign ownership and the development of Canada and prevent, in many cases, Canadians becoming masters in their own house. The other day the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) said that all the Tories want to do is talk about taxes, because if taxes are reduced the wealthy and the privileged will be better off. Perhaps he is right to some extent. But his party is worried that some one will make some money, that some Canadian will become wealthy, that some Canadian will all of a sudden be successful in Canada and will take advantage of his opportunities. That party would have us in the blue uniforms of China. That party would have us in the strait-jacket of Bolchevism. That party does not give a darn about Canadians. That party wants to stifle enterprise, stifle initiative, and stifle progress, and that is why they stand condemned.

• (1540)

Mr. Knight: Same old gang.