

report also went on to recommend that Parliament adopt remedial legislation once it was introduced. It said that the legislation would be "proper and in keeping with the best traditions of parliamentary government."

Perhaps some honourable senators are mildly surprised that what I described as housekeeping could be characterized with such seriousness and gravity. Yet, it is merely recognition that form as well as substance sometimes demands our care. So, the bill is necessary if Customs administration is to work appropriately and consistently. My request for senatorial approval is based on the original intent of the Customs Tariff. Clearly the purpose of the tariff is to protect the public interest by ensuring stability in the supply of domestically grown produce. At the same time we encourage the importation of affordable fresh produce during the off-season.

To sum up then, the Fruit and Vegetable Customs Orders Validation Bill will validate retroactively the collection of seasonal Customs duties done without complete authority between January 1, 1972, and January 10, 1985. It will also deem the Customs duties on imported produce between June 28, 1984, and January 10, 1985, to have been remitted in full. Passing the bill will confirm our belief that Customs duties were collected in good faith and in compliance with what was considered to be valid subordinate legislation.

• (1440)

In conclusion, honourable senators, I would like to repeat for my colleagues a comment by Thomas Carlyle, that great 19th century English philosopher and writer. He said, "It is meritorious to insist on forms," because anything of substance clothes itself in that way. "Everywhere the formed world is the only habitable one," he continued. By using the word "habitable" he reminds us to take care of our housekeeping.

On motion of Senator Frith, for Senator Barrow, debate adjourned.

CORPORATIONS AND LABOUR UNIONS RETURNS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

Hon. James Balfour moved the second reading of Bill C-91, to amend the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act.

He said: Honourable senators, Bill C-91, an act to amend the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act, called CALURA, is now before the Senate. This legislation, which was passed in 1962, involves the reporting of ownership and financial information relating to corporations and labour unions operating in this country.

The information collected under CALURA has been reported to Parliament annually and has proven to be a unique and highly valuable reference on the extent and effects of foreign ownership and control of corporations in Canada, and on the affiliation of Canadian with international labour unions.

Its prime objective was, and remains, to provide the government and the general public with objective information on

corporate concentration and the extent to which parts of the Canadian economy are owned and controlled from abroad.

During more than two decades of existence CALURA has provided the most consistent, complete and detailed information on the financial structure and degree of foreign ownership of the Canadian economy. This is information that has served royal commissions, government departments and the academic and business communities. Its ownership series have been the basis for virtually all Canadian reports and articles, both public and private, on corporate concentration and foreign ownership of the Canadian economy.

The CALURA reports show clearly how the leading 500 non-financial enterprises accounted for more than half of all sales, two-thirds of all assets, and almost three-fourths of profits. Of the 500 leading enterprises just about half are foreign controlled.

United States controlled corporations account for 75 per cent of the sales and 85 per cent of the profits of foreign-controlled non-financial corporations. These facts are essential to any discussion of the corporate sector in Canada, including competition policy and trade negotiations. They can only be established from CALURA annual reports.

In addition, CALURA ownership information is available to the public through the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Due to widespread demand, Statistics Canada has regularly produced a highly popular directory entitled "Inter-Corporate Ownership", which shows who owns and controls business in Canada. This publication has served many executives, market managers, investors, journalists and economists—and, indeed, parliamentarians—studying and writing on the corporate structure of the Canadian economy. Ownership data are also distributed electronically by private enterprise to banks, financial institutions and other corporations across Canada.

It is obvious that CALURA, during its two decades of existence, has proved absolutely essential in the analysis of economic affairs in Canada. I am sure all Canadians recognize the value of CALURA information and are pleased that this government's initiative to improve economic efficiency by reducing paper burden will not affect in any way the important data on the structure of Canadian industrial society provided by this legislation.

Those measures which this bill addresses relate purely to the administration of the legislation and the burden it has imposed on the business community. Equally important, there are justifiable concerns that very confidential information must remain solely under the purview of Statistics Canada.

In making all CALURA financial and technology transfer data confidential to Statistics Canada, business may feel reassured in responding under CALURA. At the same time, Statistics Canada will continue to supply policy departments non-confidential aggregates in support of the economic analysis of key policy issues.

In summary, this bill fulfills this government's commitment to alleviate the response burden by reinstating the corporate