

*Oral Questions*

without introducing an additional factor that might only prolong the disagreement and, therefore, add to the problem. At this time the best situation for the Government, in the judgment of the Minister of Labour, is to continue a close monitoring of the situation without having any direct intervention.

## GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Madam Speaker, there is also the possibility of a lockout. In light of the fact that both parties have called upon the Government and are willing to agree to a conciliation commissioner being appointed, why does the Government not try to get an agreement from both sides to keep the operation going while the conciliation commissioner or the board does its work, and thereby keep the ports open for that period of time? In that way grain could continue to be exported and, hopefully, there could be a satisfactory settlement. Why does the Government not follow that procedure since it makes sense to both sides?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, there is a very basic principle involved in the whole system of collective bargaining. Each side to a dispute must accept its own public responsibilities. It is not up to Government to intervene at every point in time. It is our sincere hope that both sides in this dispute will recognize their public responsibility and come to a settlement without in any way injuring the public interest.

\* \* \*

● (1440)

## CORPORATE AFFAIRS

## INVESTIGATION OF NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE'S REFUSAL OF SASKATOON FRANCHISE

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Yesterday, Ralston-Purina, the owners of the St. Louis Blues hockey team, launched a lawsuit in the United States under American anti-trust laws. The National Hockey League is a type of public trust, Madam Speaker. Numerous benefits have been granted by Canadians to the League, including the amateur draft, a virtual monopoly status, and public money for arenas and television rights. More than that, hockey is central to the Canadian identity.

In view of the Minister's undertaking to launch an investigation under the Combines Investigation Act, and in view of the fact that legal proceedings have now commenced in the United States, can the Minister indicate to the House when this examination and investigation will be concluded?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I understand that the Director of Investigation and Research is pursuing the matter. He has been in touch with some of the Governors of the NHL. I

understand that he has also been in touch with the directors of Ralston-Purina and he is looking into the matter. No decision has yet been reached as to whether there is any breach of the Combines Investigation Act, but as soon as the Director terminates his fact-finding search, I will report to the House.

## REQUEST THAT COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT BE AMENDED

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate, and the Minister will understand, that time is of the essence in this matter because there was a real question raised as to whether the Saskatchewan application was given a fair hearing. According to all reports, the hearing was merely a charade. There should be some principles of natural justice that apply to these particular applications.

Under the present provisions of the Combines Investigation Act, the matter of transfer and operation of professional sports franchises is specifically excluded from the operation of Section 32, the Freedom of Trade Section. Has the Minister given consideration, or will the Government give consideration to amending this provision in order to make it applicable to the transfer of franchises within the National Hockey League?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, it may be a little premature to deal with this aspect of the law at this time. I hope in the near future to be able to introduce a series of amendments to the Combines Investigation Act. I hope that at that time the Hon. Member will support my initiatives.

\* \* \*

## HEALTH

## QUERY RESPECTING INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I wonder if the Minister can tell us today when we will see the Canada Health Act. Could she also tell us whether the Canada Health Act will be centred on more control for Ottawa or on better Health care for Canadians?

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Madam Speaker, we will see the Canada Health Act as soon as possible and, of course, its purpose has always been to strengthen the best social programs Canadians have ever had.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## MEETINGS OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL MINISTERS

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West):** Madam Speaker, under the British North America Act, jurisdiction over health and welfare is shared with the Provinces. I wonder if the Minister could share with us any information she has as to when she last met face to face with any provincial Minister in terms of the preparation of this Act.