

Concentrations of Power

recent years the opposite of what the statement says has happened. At one point in the statement there are suggestions that further large-scale concentrations of power in Canada "may be" taking place. That is a euphemism. It is not simply suggested by Professor Wallace Clement but it has been documented that in case after case and in sector after sector of the Canadian economy we have had an increasing concentration of economic power among a small elite in our society.

That is my first point, Mr. Speaker. My second point bears on the question whether the commission will have the right to make recommendations for change.

Our banking industry in Canada has played a crucial role in financing foreign corporations in their attempts to take over major sections of the Canadian economy. Is this commission going to have the authority to recommend a change in the fundamental nature of the Canadian banking system?

My final point bears directly on one of the tasks assigned to the commission in terms of whether concentration of power is of social and economic benefit to Canada. The conclusion Professor Clement reaches in his book is that concentration of economic power in Canada is fundamentally inimical to those who believe in social and economic equality; that to achieve a society in which equality of opportunity is at all possible, a fundamental change in the nature of economic power in Canadian society is required. I doubt very much whether we are going to get that kind of recommendation from this kind of commission.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, some forty years ago, the Stevens enquiry was ordered in Canada to achieve just about the same objectives as those the Prime Minister set out in his statement. We have seldom heard of it since. I would hate this new commission to have the same fate; I would like to know where we are going.

Mr. Speaker, the new royal commission announced by the right hon. Prime Minister will certainly discover cartels, monopolies, coalitions and concentrations, but not only in the field of big companies where obviously they exist. We, of the Social Credit Party of Canada, have a basic principle, which we clamour and express right across Canada. I quote:

[English]

We firmly believe that the individual is the most important factor in organized society. Because he is a divinely created being with spiritual, mental and physical needs and potentialities he has inalienable rights which must be respected and preserved.

Because of this belief, we are unalterably opposed to communism, fascism and all forms of totalitarian government which make the individual citizen subservient to the state.

We stand opposed to political organization whose aims are the furtherance of the sectional interests of organized labour, business, or finance.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the royal commission of inquiry announced by the Prime Minister should take in consideration what the then Prime Minister learned in 1931 and what I learned myself in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, to wit:

[Mr. Broadbent.]

... they hold the money and completely control it, control credit also and rule the lending of money. Hence they regulate the flow, so to speak, of the lifeblood...

Mr. Speaker, if that commission only investigates to find out large corporations, we do not need it. The present legislation deals with corporations, monopolies, thieves and so on. Mr. Speaker, not only is there concentration in the hands of corporations, but there is also concentration in the hands of labour unions, which is also a danger for the average citizen.

I learned this morning about the complaints of the CNTU that there are agreements between the QFL of Montreal, the James Bay Corporation, the government, the City of Montreal and what have you to control labour.

Mr. Speaker, that commission should be instructed to consider labour relations or conditions as much as trade, industry and corporations in Canada. We will then surely find solutions to the problems which we are now facing.

[English]

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether it is the intention of the government to hold up consideration of the amendments to the Combines Investigation Act or certain aspects of those amendments until the commission completes its work? I ask this in view of the reference of the Prime Minister to the terms of reference of the commission as including whether existing legislation and planned amendments to the Combines Investigation Act are sufficiently comprehensive to ensure protection of the public interest, and so on.

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker, on the contrary: we hope that the opposition parties will co-operate with the government in expediting the adoption of phase one of our competition policy, the legislation that is presently before the House. We certainly intend that that shall become law, parliament willing, by the end of June.

The government has made it clear that this phase one is to be followed by a second phase in the next session of parliament. The second phase would contain many provisions, but I think it is probably fair to sum up the spirit of that proposed legislation as being intended to ensure greater efficiency of the economic system in Canada. It is possible that if we get the recommendations on this in time, we could incorporate some of them or at least consider them before the end of the next session. If there should be some delay, we could still proceed with the second phase and consider acting again in the session after next, if such action seems to be warranted following the report of the commission.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to argue with the Prime Minister about this; I just want to know what his intentions are regarding the legislation. Is it the intention of the government to take any interim action to prevent further large-scale movements toward concentration of corporate power in the country? To be specific, is it the intention of the government to hold up the proposed takeover of the Argus Corporation by the Power Corporation pending the report of the inquiry to be conducted by the commission announced today?