

Continental Bank of Canada

Household Finance, Avco, and the whole gang trotting in here with their friends in the other place starting private bills and smuggling them into this chamber via a private member.

An hon. Member: Here we go again.

Mr. Rodriguez: Hon. members over there do not like debate.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): It is the fiction I object to, not debate.

Mr. Rodriguez: Here again, the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne) is missing the point. If we had gone along with the usual desultory examination at that point, we would now have before us legislation far inferior to this. Instead of making smart remarks, the hon. member would do well to start looking seriously at the bills which come before us during private members' hour.

We put forward our objections in the form of a number of amendments, and in these circumstances the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River and his cohorts in the IAC saw the wisdom of the arguments advanced by members on this side who are concerned about the economic structures we put into place. As a result, the bill before us is a clear refutation of the comment made by the hon. member for Scarborough East (Mr. O'Connell) who expressed a wish that closure might be possible during private members' hour. We intend to apply the same gentle consideration to the bill which he is sponsoring.

I assure hon. members that what we have here in Bill C-1001 is a direct result of the recommendations and amendments we have put forward. If we had raised those objections in a purely philosophic or argumentative way we would, no doubt, have been told it was not possible to make changes of the kind we had in mind; that they would put great stress upon the company, making it impossible to operate, and so on. But lo and behold, the Bronfman family found it could accommodate everything we proposed. As meek as mice scuttling over the kitchen in the middle of the night to steal cheese, by golly, they accepted every amendment.

Very shortly we shall be discussing another bill in private members' hour. This is not a threat, but a promise. We intend to examine it very closely, and we hope the proposals we intend to make with regard to it can be realized. However that maybe, we are prepared to accept the bill before us as amended, recognizing that the suggestions we have made are incorporated in it. We hope it will be possible to reach a similar successful conclusion with regard to other bills which come before us in the same way.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

Mr. Reid: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank hon. members for their courtesy and help. It has been a fascinating experience to be working with so many members on legislation of such importance. I appreciate the help and advice I have received in connection with certain changes which have been advisable. Most members will agree, I think, that we have been responsive to their wishes and that the bill is an improvement over the one first introduced.

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

BELL CANADA

The House resumed, from Thursday, June 16, consideration of the motion of Mr. O'Connell that Bill S-2, respecting Bell Canada, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications; and the amendment thereto of Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, last week I had just begun to make some remarks on the bill now before us. I will take up where the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) left off. It is our intention to do the same with this bill as we did with the bill on IAC. With a great deal of persistence our party was able to amend that measure to the extent that it became a decent bill. We propose to do this without the help of the Conservative party, I presume, because they are sitting on their hands.

The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) is an intelligent member. Like myself, he comes from the province of Saskatchewan, the province which offers us the experience of seeing how a telephone system should be run, because it is publicly-owned. It is a public utility serving all people equally. This is what Bell Canada should be; it should be nationalized and publicly owned.

● (1730)

For that reason I am not at all interested in facilitating Bell Canada's wishes to expand their company operations, or to get around the regulations of the CRTC and fatten the pocket books of their private shareholders. I am interested in a publicly owned telephone system in Canada such as the one in the province of Saskatchewan. That is a system the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar is proud of, one that I am proud of and which every other member of parliament from that province is proud of.

I want to see a system like the one in Manitoba which is also publicly owned. If the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie) were here, I am sure he would be on his feet extolling the virtues of public ownership, because he worked for the Manitoba telephone system before he came to the House of Commons. I know what a great socialist member he is, and he would agree it is a good system. He would be opposed to Bell Canada doing what they are to the ordinary folk of this country. He would be calling for the nationalization of a utility that takes advantage of the ordinary citizen.

I should not really be speaking for these two Conservative members because I shall not leave enough time to speak for myself. I want to prove the case for public ownership. The Saskatchewan Telephone Corporation has been in operation now for a number of years and it provides excellent service to the people of that province. It also returns a great deal of profit to the people of Saskatchewan year in and year out. I have before me the 1976 annual report of the Saskatchewan Telephone Corporation and I find that it has made tremendous profits. Let me go back to 1967, for example. We are only a small province with one million people, and one would think it would be difficult to set up an organization of this sort. I know