

*Canada Corporations Act*

This was Frank S. Capon, Vice-President of Du Pont of Canada, and in his case the crucial decisions are made by the handful of men in the United States who control E. I. Dupont de Nemours and Co. Mr. Capon was speaking to the meeting in Montreal of the Society of the Chemical Industry and, entirely apart from his frankness, it was a meeting worthy of attention by the people of Canada.

The chemical industry is generally regarded as one of the main sources of rapid growth in an industrial society, yet the president of a Crown corporation, Dr. E. R. Rowzee of Polymer Corp., warned that in its present condition in Canada it may require old-fashioned subsidies to survive. Very quietly, the Department of Trade and Commerce has been studying the industry's problems and a confidential report has been drawn up.

I suppose this will mean that some member of the New Democratic Party will have to put a motion on the Order Paper seeking an order for return with respect to that confidential report, once again battling the secrecy of the government which uses the taxpayers' money to draw up such a report. Now I return to the article:

If one of the great growth industries of the industrial era is in difficulties in this country, one must begin by questioning the quality of the decision making that has been involved and we immediately encounter the fact that in this case we are not concerned with a decision making process that takes place in Canada. As Mr. Capon frankly admitted, it takes place elsewhere; so far as this particular industry in Canada is concerned, largely in Britain and the United States.

That the foreign decision making process can be questioned can be seen in the comment of a highly responsible, industry-oriented official in Ottawa who was discussing the Rowzee and Capon speeches:

"The basic problem is that the units of production are not large enough, but one must say that the industry takes very surprising decisions at times—astonishing ones. Rivalry leads it to create overproduction and then the industry encounters difficulties which it foresaw in advance."

If we had overproduction and the decisions leading to it were made in Canada, that would be one thing; but when Canadian consumers find their hands tied because they have no control over decisions made in other countries, it is another thing. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) should introduce legislation to deal with this situation.

I will remember when the minister and I both sat on a joint committee of the House and Senate, a committee of which he was joint chairman, and the question of a great international cartel controlling quinine supplies, including the drug Quinidine, was discussed. At that time men and women in this country who were heart sufferers needed this drug, but its price went up astronomically

[Mrs. MacInnis.]

due to the operations of this cartel in Britain, Holland and the United States. Nothing could be done about it in Canada because of the law that existed then, and nothing can be done about it today because of the law as it exists now. That is the indictment that can be laid against this legislation. In a way, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is motherhood. Most of us can agree with it, but motherhood resolutions are not sufficient to deal with the problems facing consumers.

Yesterday I was amazed to hear a prominent frontbench member of the official opposition worry about the civil liberties of corporations and the possible invasion of those liberties by this proposed legislation. If we have to choose between the civil liberties of corporations and the consumers' right to know, I am sure in the minds of most Canadians the top priority must be given to the consumers. The civil liberties of corporations effect a relatively small percentage of the population, and it seems to me we should at all costs be prepared to protect the interests of the majority of consumers.

I hope the minister will recall that he has another and a better half—and I am not referring to his wife. While he may be Minister of Corporate Affairs, he is also Minister of Consumer Affairs. I have always thought it was wrong to include a conflict of interest, such as between corporations and consumers, within one department. From past experience I know that in such a case the consumers get the short end of the stick.

Canadian consumers are looking to the minister to help them. They hope he will introduce legislation of a worth-while kind to protect their interests, interests that have been badly damaged in recent months by some takeovers and by the activities of certain huge corporations. As I say, Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides protection for shareholders and people connected with corporations. But many people are not shareholders and have nothing to do with corporations. The great majority of the Canadian people need protection provided by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The sooner we have a divorce in that department, the better I will like it.

I would like to see the minister emerge as the Minister of Consumer Affairs and leave the corporations to the tender mercy of somebody else. There is on the other side of the House a lot of tender mercy for corporations