

We regulate transportation costs in the public interest. We do not always do it well, as is evidenced by the transportation mess that we have in the country at the present time, but the principle of reconciliation is accepted. We permit the Minister of Finance to authorize banks to set uniform interest rates on deposits, as indeed well we might. Certainly, if we start moving into a situation where we want to get inflation under control and where it is public policy to reduce interest rates, this is a power that must reside in the Minister of Finance because it is one of the most important aspects affecting the over-all interest rates situation in this country. Those of us who believe that something must be done would not want to see the Minister of Finance without this power of regulation. Yet we realize it is inconsistent with the old, out worn concept of genuine competition at all levels.

Why cannot we recognize both the right and the necessity of establishing guidelines under which union power and market power could operate in the public interest? People are getting sick of strikes. People are getting sick of slowdowns and of working to rule. People are getting sick of students who are not being taught. People are getting sick of having their travel arrangements disrupted by strikes or any other device. No one wins; everyone loses. It is almost as if we were considering the human body, Mr. Speaker. How could we say to any one of the systems in the human body, "We can do without you for some period of time"? We cannot say to the heart, "You do not need to work"; nor to the respiratory system, "You can have the weekend off". It is impossible to operate any interdependent complex system in this way and similarly it is impossible to operate a complex interrelated system like our modern economy in this way.

● (1550)

People are getting sick of rising prices. They are getting sick of dramatically increased profits with their inflationary increments. People are getting sick of the status quo. People are sick of the confrontation between business, labour and government and it is obvious that something new must be tried. A policy of reconciliation must be tried and given a chance.

The Prime Minister has chided my leader for suggesting a new approach. Surely, anyone as wedded to policies which have been proven as disastrous as present policy, should not pour scorn or ridicule on new approaches.

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

**Mr. Hellyer:** The government's policy is set in the concrete of the 1930's and the 1940's.

**Mr. Bell:** With the NDP.

**Mr. Hellyer:** They are all part of the same bunch. Neither has had a new idea since 1935. The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) on the other hand, welcomes new ideas. He is willing to innovate; he is willing to accept the risk involved in blazing a new trail. He is willing to set Canada on a new course of conciliation under which all Canadians can work together but work as partners to build a new Canada.

### *Competition Bill*

**Mr. Jim Fleming (York West):** Mr. Speaker, despite the closing comments of the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer), rather than launch into a tirade in response to the very superficial and traditional remarks at the conclusion of each address by hon. members opposite, anxious and lusting for power but a long distance from it, I should like to begin by saying simply that this bill before the House today is a plateful of nutritious justice for Canadian consumers. It has been a long time in the kitchen. It is action to achieve a major cleanup of the marketplace, and it is of great significance to all consumers, urban and rural alike. The various measures in this one bill are enough to make any parliament proud of it as the work of an entire session, were that all that was accomplished. It is a most significant choice as the first piece of legislation to be debated in this second session of parliament following the throne speech debate. I hope the bills that follow from this government will each be half as significant, in protecting and assisting Canadians, as this bill is to Canadian consumers.

During the leadoff address by the minister yesterday, when he urged quick, thoughtful, but prompt judgment of this legislation so that it could pass into law and at last correct these injustices in our system, some members opposite heckled "If that is the case, why did you not do something last December? Why did you bring it in last November? Why have you not done anything about it until now?" Of course, a few minutes later when the minister had finished, the first spokesman for the official opposition rose and said, "One of the things that is really bad about this is that you gave it to us on Monday and you spring debate on us two days later." That is the kind of hypocrisy that the official opposition suggests is honest debate and criticism of the actions of government. I really doubt very much whether they are carrying out their full responsibility. I always thought that progressive conservatism meant that there was at least some progress within conservatism. I am beginning to think that it means becoming progressively more conservative.

**Mr. Baker:** Tell us about the glories of the new world.

**Mr. Fleming:** Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to have the attention of hon. members opposite. That is a rare compliment, when they listen and consider someone else's view.

If I may continue, Mr. Speaker, back in 1966 the Economic Council of Canada was called on by government to study this situation. The first competition bill was brought down in June of 1971, and we are all familiar with the strong reaction to it. It has been eight years in total since work was begun on a study of this matter. As I said a few moments ago, this bill was first presented late last year; now we have it, and now it is time to act. I hope that members on both sides of this House who are concerned about consumers and their protection will responsibly act together to take action, make amendments where necessary in committee, and bring forward the bill to have it passed into law as soon as possible.

I want to put into the record, if I may, Mr. Speaker, the reaction of some small business leaders and some of our media people in Canada who are often critical of the government. There is for instance the statement given at