

one statement has been made by a single provincial Minister thus far. I have received no indication from those who have read this law and understand what it is—

Mr. Broadbent: Did you ask the others?

Mr. Ouellet: I have received no indication, at all, of major objections to it.

QUEBEC INVESTMENT IN CANADIAN PACIFIC LTD.

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs on the same subject. If this Bill is passed into law, can he tell us whether it will prevent the Caisse de Dépôt et Placement du Québec from expanding their investment in Canadian Pacific Ltd?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): The answer is yes, Madam Speaker.

POWER CORPORATION INVESTMENT IN CANADIAN PACIFIC LTD.

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister. Has he personally, or indirectly through his Department, received any indication from Mr. Paul Desmarais and Power Corporation that they wish to expand their investment and ultimately control Canadian Pacific Ltd.?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): The answer is no, Madam Speaker.

REASONS FOR NOT ACTING AGAINST PRIVATE COMPANIES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the same Minister. As the Minister well knows, the federal Government already has constitutional authority to regulate firms engaged in interprovincial transportation activity. Why is the Government now introducing a measure that would restrict provincial governments from ownership in such sectors when it has taken no steps at all to stop private companies from becoming as large as they want in the same sectors?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I think that we have here a very important interpretation and basic philosophy. The free movement of goods and services in Canada and the primacy of the private sector have always been protected. This has always been to the advantage of Canadians, and we believe in maintaining this approach.

[English]

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the insensitivity of this Government to the provinces and to other ways of doing things, is truly remarkable.

Oral Questions

TREATMENT OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister why he thinks it is appropriate to trust the Exxon Corporation, which is owned and controlled outside Canada and which happens to control Imperial Oil which, in turn, controls Interprovincial Pipelines. Why is it more appropriate to trust this multinational with our national interests than the provincial governments of Canada which are elected by Canadians?

• (1425)

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, the Canadian Government can, of course, act far more readily to control private enterprise in certain cases. We can pass appropriate regulations applying to private enterprise. If, however, we must introduce regulations to counter action taken by provincial governments, we then have a federal-provincial conflict on our hands. That is why today, while there is no conflict, while the situation is relatively calm and it is easier to intervene since there are no structures to dismantle, that is why we want to establish a set of very clear regulations marking the primacy of the Canadian Government, in order to avoid future conflicts with the provinces.

[English]

PROPOSED MERGER OF QUEBECAIR AND NORDAIR

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, the Minister was wrong in principle in his earlier answer. He is wrong in fact in the one he has just given.

Will he confirm that he received from the Minister of Transport in the Province of Quebec a request which was made jointly by the provinces of Ontario and Quebec to move to rationalize their air transportation system by merging Quebecair and Nordair, I repeat a request which came as early as August from two provincial governments to take appropriate action to rationalize their airway systems? Did the Government receive such a request in August? If so, will the Government explain what is so wrong in this country about two provincial governments getting control of airlines that will in a regional way benefit their own people?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I might answer this question. Indeed a couple of months ago I received such a suggestion. What was mentioned at the time was not that the Government of Ontario and the Government of Quebec were going to take over whatever would be the result of this operation. It was, as a principle, private sector entities that were supposed to come in, so in that case the present bill would not apply. My friend, the Minister of Transport for Quebec, suffers from a persecution complex. Everything I do seems to hurt him. On the Quebecair situation, a number of months ago the Government of Quebec