

Competition Bill

Democratic Party in order to stay in office. It is not a question of principle. It is the only thing the government can do. It must keep the NDP happy.

The major complaint I have is that this bill takes the wrong view in respect of the kind of economy we have in the 1970's. The bill contains some provisions that will help in the trade of goods. It does ban certain obnoxious retail practices. However, it is not a bill that would do anything to reduce prices in Canada. It takes a totally wrong approach. The approach taken in this bill will not reduce prices in Canada. We live in an economy where the major price structure is controlled by large corporations and large unions. These corporations set prices on an administrative basis, on what they think they can get for their product. If they decide they want to pay more for labour or for management's salaries, they pass that on. They could continue to do that. There is nothing to prevent them from doing so in this bill. They can stay well within the framework of the bill, and there will be no improvement in the price structure or in the competition among them.

● (1650)

What we need is a new approach, a new industrial and commercial policy for Canada in terms of the pricing of goods, the pricing of labour, and the pricing of incomes in the public interest. That can only be done with a rounded incomes policy, and that is not being done in this bill. This bill sets up more bureaucracy and more rules for people to watch out for but it does not get at the real issue of 1974, and that is inflation which is as high as we have ever had it and going higher. When the cost of everything we buy goes up by at least one per cent a month, when people are buying and buying because they have no faith in paper money, that is inflation.

We have a government which introduces some fiddly bureaucratic rules and controls. It hopes to accomplish something with those rules, but it really accomplishes nothing. Other than the provisions in this bill that clean up some dishonest business practices which I have mentioned earlier, this bill will need a great deal of review and reconsideration. The government should withdraw the bill immediately as it is now presented and produce a new bill covering those parts of competition that eliminate the bad practices of some businesses. It should present such a bill to the House, which would then be passed. The government should then, if it wants to go further, bring to the House committee a separate bill dealing with refusal to sell, franchise agreements, territorial agreements and that type of thing which seems to concern them so that the House committee could have the time to hear witnesses, to understand these problems and to determine whether or not they are worth solving.

The same applies to the field of sports. If the government approached this bill with the real intention of doing something for Canadians; those parts of the bill that are valid would be passed very quickly. But the government does not do that. It put all these matters under one roof and said: "Aren't we wonderful". If they understood the economics of this nation and the problems of the 1970's they would not have presented the bill the way it is and they would have banned some of the distasteful practices.

[Mr. Blenkarn.]

Before concluding I want to mention one other matter that has concerned a number of us, that is the provisions in the bill that allegedly look after a situation in which the rules of a foreign government affect the trade practices of Canadians. Under the provisions of this bill, the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission is supposed to review that type of contract. These provisions in the bill are a complete abandonment of this government's responsibility to ensure that foreign laws do not control the business ethics and attitudes of Canadian businessmen. It is the government's obligation to act as they should have acted long ago in this matter before it was taken up by the public press. It should have stepped in and said: "This is Canada and if you are going to do business in Canada then you should follow Canadian rules and laws".

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired. He can conclude his speech if there is unanimity. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Blenkarn: I was just about to finish in any event, Mr. Speaker. I say that the provisions in connection with the control of foreigners doing business in Canada are not satisfactory and do not come to grips with the problem. This matter should be dealt with in another two section bill which should provide, as the hon. member for St. Paul's indicated, that foreigners or foreign controlled corporations doing business in Canada should obey the rules of trade in Canada and not be subject to the rules of trade that may emanate from their home country which may make their activity in this country illegal. That is an easy matter. It could be introduced by this government and would, I am sure, be passed by the House without even having to go to committee.

This omnibus bill leaves a great deal to be desired because of the way it is put together and because of the nature of the bill. I say to the minister—and I wish he were here—that if he wants this bill passed he should break it up into two parts. Some parts would be put through instantly and others would have to be closely examined. A great number of witnesses must be heard and it may take a long time before this bill returns to the House for third reading.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker)—Energy—Price of Home Heating Oil in Ottawa Area; the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes)—Manpower—Opportunities for Youth Program—Level of budget in Sudbury area; the hon. member for Winnipeg South