

*Competition Tribunal Act*

most likely to be regulated by effective competition legislation. It would appear that the Minister has listened to the representatives of large business and that not enough notice has been taken of the lobbying efforts of the organizations that represent small business and the Canadian consumer.

My Party tabled a letter to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Côté) listing seven independent experts whom we believed should be consulted on Canadian competition policy and whose views we felt were worth taking into account in the framing and tabling of new legislation. Our follow up indicates that there has been only the most perfunctory consultation with these experts, and that by and large it is the interests and representations of large business organizations that have been included in the legislation.

The House of Commons cannot afford, and the Government should not be able to get away with introducing in Canada competition legislation that will lead to a replay of the history of having one successful prosecution for price rigging in the last 100 years. That sort of regulation is not what the Government was elected to bring in. It is not the sort of toothless bulldog that the people of Canada will allow to shamble around the alleys of corporate power.

The people of Canada want to see legislation with teeth, legislation that will prevent price fixing and corporate concentration, legislation that will control self-dealing and above all legislation that will ensure the delivery of all products and services, and particularly refined gasoline products, to Canadians at prices that represent only a fair return and a fair producer margin and do not include padding for inefficiencies, financing of future takeovers, funding of corporate expansion and the general support framework for concentration of corporate power in Canada. I fear that if Bill C-91 is passed as is, it will allow all those things to continue, possibly even at a greater speed than they have in the past.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member who just spoke whether he believes that the Bill tabled by the Minister, especially in the section that concerns mergers, is an adequate response to the present need for legislation on competition in order to prevent mergers that would be disastrous to the Canadian economy.

To me it seems clear that Bill C-29, as tabled in the House by the previous Government, had the advantage of providing a whole series of factors that had to be taken into consideration when deciding whether a merger was acceptable or not. I think that with Bill C-91, the Minister has diluted the impact and the scope of the Bill, especially in the section on mergers, by removing the very factors that should be considered when assessing whether a merger is good or bad for the Canadian economy.

**Mr. Parry:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his question and comments.

As far as Bill C-29 is concerned, since I was not a Member of this House when the Bill was tabled, I would rather not make any judgment on its merits.

However, as far as the present Bill is concerned, I fully agree with my hon. colleague, in that it does not provide the same legislative or governmental authority for regulating mergers that could have disastrous consequences for the Canadian economy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Order. Questions and comments? The period provided for questions and comments has now expired. The Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand).

*[English]*

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on Bill C-91 because I had introduced a similar Bill in 1978 prior to the 1979 election. While this Bill tends to go in the same direction as the Bill I had introduced, a Bill which was known as Bill C-13, it is not quite as strong in many areas. However, as my hon. colleagues have said, the Bill is certainly an improvement over the legislation that is presently in force and we will support the motion to send it to committee where we hope that, with extensive hearings, we might be able to agree on certain amendments that would strengthen the Bill.

Bill C-91 has had a long history. The process began in 1969, I believe, with the report of the Economic Council of Canada on competition policy. That report was very critical of the legislation that was in place, the Combines Investigation Act, and its record in dealing with restrictive practices and mergers in the market-place. The report of the Economic Council at that time recommended wide-ranging legislation to correct the abuses and shortcomings in the Combines Investigation Act and its implementation.

• (1130)

Initially Bill C-256 was introduced in 1971 by the Hon. Ron Basford who was the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs at that time. That Bill was met with massive objections from the business community. In many cases those objections were wrongly directed. However, the Bill was debated. It went to committee and stayed there for ever and a day. When that session came to an end that Bill died. Following that, another attempt was made in 1975 when the previous Bill was split into two parts, and Bill C-2 was finally passed. In 1977, Bill C-42 was introduced to carry on the reform of the competition legislation. It also died on the Order Paper due to opposition. Then I introduced Bill C-13 in 1978. In 1984, Bill C-29 was introduced by the former Hon. Member for Nickel Belt, Judy Erola, and now we have Bill C-91. We have had six Bills attempting to deal with this important subject since the report of the Economic Council of Canada in 1969.

These Bills attempted to deal with several problems in the legislation which were criticized over the years. The most important one was the absolute failure of the provisions in the