

Canada Corporations Act

instance, highway robbers and exploiters of small people, profiteers who take in millions and millions of dollars, asking the government to take over some corporations or even nationalize them in order to achieve a more equitable distribution of the country's wealth.

Mr. Speaker, one seems to forget that the millions of dollars made by these companies are not necessarily stashed away in order to ensure them a cash reserve. On the contrary, the corporations are investing their profits in their firms to expand.

I remember reading one day the speech made by a great American tycoon. I refer to Henry Ford who said some time before he died: If I had to launch my industry today, I could not do it because when I started in the car industry, I could use my profits to expand, to enlarge my plants and I did. Today, I could not do it simply because the government takes away my profits and I have to go to credit lenders and borrow at prohibitive interest rates in order to expand.

Today, this same thinking should be understood by the Canadian parliament and the Canadian people.

Often I hear people say: If there are poor people in Canada, it is due to the large corporations and the profits they make. It is incorrect to say or to attempt to prove that poverty in some areas of Canada is due exclusively to corporations.

I know that some corporations, and the same is true of any other sector of our economy, are guilty of abuses. For example, if several companies combine in order to fix prices, in that case the government is certainly obligated to interfere in order to prevent trusts.

In the past, we have seen cases where the organizers of trusts or combines were sentenced to fines from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Those people did not care because by raising their prices by a quarter of a cent or half a cent, they could make a \$50 million profit within 12 or 24 hours.

That was laughing at the government or at justice.

Therefore, as concerns combines, trusts or people who want to monopolize in order to exploit the Canadian people, I say that the government should take more restrictive measures, not only by having them pay a fine, but by sentencing them to jail. In fact, a five or ten-year jail term would give the trust or combine organizers something to think about.

If we really want to protect private enterprise as well as the establishment of new corporations or ensure the respect of already established ones, we should preserve healthy competition that provides for a better output to the consumer sector in our society.

Whenever a company does not provide good service, or produces low-quality goods, competition takes on great importance since consumers will prefer honest companies which really have at heart the welfare of the people.

This 80-page bill is really a substantial one, but hon. members have not had enough time to consider all its clauses.

In any event, I feel this is a measure that could improve the part played by corporations in our society. This measure is intended to protect the consumer and I hope it will do so. Were we some day to, realize it has failed to achieve its objective, it would be up to us to introduce the required amendments.

Mr. Speaker, provided we keep a watchful eye on them, it is possible to have in Canada honest corporations, eager to promote the general welfare of the country and respectful of the laws passed by the federal parliament. If every corporation is led to see the importance of legislation passed in order to ensure the over-all welfare of the people, the Canadian parliament will have contributed to help the consumers of the country and the nation as a whole.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, in my opinion this is a very large bill to correct a very small fault with relation to the private members' hour. That has been mentioned as one of the reasons for this bill. I think there are probably other reasons for it. Some of them have been mentioned.

The objection which we in this party have is that bills coming before Parliament recently have not been met by the terms of this bill, and I do not think they will be. The minister is to be congratulated on building up a bureaucracy in his department from a very small beginning to what has obviously become a large section of the government. I remember when there were only three or four people in the companies branch and the function of two or three of them was to help the others back on their chairs when for various reasons they fell off. This was about all that was done in the companies branch. Obviously the minister intends to make changes. This is good, because from my personal observations