

The chief whip of the opposition party on "Question Period" broadcast on Sunday, March 17, had this to say, and I ask hon. members, particularly of the opposition, to listen:

We are still waiting for legislation and we have been here for two weeks now. We are still waiting for legislation to deal with inflation and the immediate problems thereto and there has been nothing come forward at all. We are on the combines law which has been talked about for years. It is going to take months to get through that combines law.

I say shame. Surely the people of Canada are fed up with this attitude that has become so evident in this House of Commons for the last year or so of deliberately holding up legislation, legislation not only that the government and people of Canada want but in many instances which many members of the chief opposition party want. Yet that is the party that holds up the democratic process, which in my opinion, and I might add in the opinion of many other people, is unfortunate.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the hon. member rising on a question of privilege or on a point of order?

Mr. Stevens: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering whether the hon. member would accept a question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, it does not matter whether it is or not; I am willing to accept a question from my hon. friend at any time, as long as he accepts my answer.

Mr. Stevens: I was wondering whether the hon. member would not agree that the act has two main divisions, one dealing with consumer orientation and the other dealing with the establishment of the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission, and that we have attempted to make it clear that we are not in disagreement with the consumer portion of the bill, whereas we do have misgivings about the corporate side. If the minister would like to divide the bill or somehow deal with it differently, then we can facilitate passage of the consumer provisions without delay.

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question of my hon. friend, if one may call it that, I would be sympathetic with his views and would suggest that perhaps he might have a question there. But he emphasizes the problem faced by the government. He said that if the bill were divided he would be pleased, as far as he is concerned, to let the bill go through. But that is not what the hon. member for St. John's East, a member on his own side of the House, has said. He did not say that half the bill was worth while; he said that all the bill was worth while, that it gave a lot more than he expected and that it was an important piece of legislation. Let hon. members opposite hold a caucus so they can get together and find out exactly what they want. Then this government, of which I am a backbencher, can bring forward other important pieces of legislation that will benefit all Canadians, not just members of the Liberal Party or opposition parties but the taxpayers of Canada who, after all, are the most important people as far as this country is concerned.

Competition Bill

One of the things that my hon. friend did not mention is this. When I had the honour of being a member of the Ontario legislature, for years this question came up periodically: Can Canada sell trucks to China, or to Russia, or to some country that the United States regarded as an enemy, without getting permission from the United States? That was a very touchy question. Certainly I as a Canadian could never accept such a state of affairs. I have always felt that we should be able to sell manufactured goods, raw materials or any type of goods we wished to sell to foreign countries with whom we were friendly, whenever we wanted to do so, provided a satisfactory deal could be arranged. But in the past such deals have been stopped.

As a matter of fact, only a week or ten days ago there were many questions from members on the opposite side of the House about a proposed sale to Cuba of railway locomotives, and it appeared we had almost to bow to our United States friends and ask the United States government for permission to sell these locomotives to Cuba even though they were made right here in Canada. As far as I am concerned, this is a ridiculous situation. This bill will make it absolutely clear that we as Canadians can sell to any country in the world we wish to. In this regard I have a clipping from the *Ottawa Journal* reporting that this train deal has gone through. I am sure that all of us, not necessarily as parliamentarians but as Canadians, are proud of this. The report is headed "\$14 million train deal: Cuba signs rail pact". It is datelined *Journal Wire Services, Miami, Florida*, and reads as follows:

Cuba has signed a \$14-million contract for 30 railway locomotives with a Canadian firm controlled largely by a U.S. company.

Havana radio, monitored in Miami, said today the pact was signed in the Cuban capital by MLW-Worthington Ltd. of Montreal and the Cuban railway enterprise.

Fifty-two per cent of the Canadian company is controlled by Studebaker-Worthington Inc. of Harrison, N.J.

The contract had been held up because of U.S. laws prohibiting U.S. firms from doing business with Cuba. But the directors of MLW-Worthington voted earlier this month to pursue the negotiations despite U.S. state department objections.

The sales by U.S. corporate subsidiaries in Canada are likely to stir long-stifled desires of some U.S. companies to do business with Cuba.

More trade would be seen as a step toward eventual resumption of diplomatic relations with Havana.

The embargo on trade with Cuba was proclaimed by President John F. Kennedy on Feb. 3, 1962, "in light of the subversive offensive of Sino-Soviet communism with which the government of Cuba is publicly aligned."

Under the trading with the enemy act, according to officials, the embargo applies to foreign subsidiaries of U.S. corporations as well as to the parent companies.

What this means is simply this. If the United States had had its way, it would have stopped trade with Cuba as far as Canada is concerned. Without this law, Mr. Speaker, in every instance where a trade agreement was reached or a deal of this sort, as we like to call it, was made, the government would have had to make a special plea to get the deal through. Bill C-7 will make it absolutely legal from now on for us to trade with whomever we wish, and indeed the bill should have been passed many years ago in my opinion. Surely this is something that is good for Canada, yet it is not mentioned by my hon. friends opposite.