

Competition Tribunal Act

Mr. Manly: Mr. Speaker, I do not think at any point in my speech I said that everything in this Bill was wrong. What I said was that this Bill does not begin to deal with real problems facing the Canadian consumer. The Bill has the weasel words like "substantially" lessening competition. So what we have is a field day for lawyers. Instead of having a Bill with some teeth to give consumers some real protection, we have a Bill which is fairly thick, which has a lot of verbiage, but which does not do the job required.

Mr. Domm: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member of the New Democratic Party if he would explain why he would make the statement in the House that the Consumers' Association of Canada does not endorse the Bill, and has not been consulted? It has written letters of support. In fact, it was the Consumers' Association of Canada which asked that a tribunal be set up. It was one of its key thrusts, in order that we could have representation from the business sector in deciding whether major corporations were gaining a dominant position in the marketplace. Where did the Hon. Member get his information that the Consumers' Association does not support this Bill?

Mr. Manly: Mr. Speaker, I wish the Hon. Member would listen to what I said. I did not say the Consumers' Association of Canada did not support this Bill. I said that the Consumers' Association of Canada was in effect told to take it or leave it, like it or lump it, and that it had better start making the right noises. That is in effect what has happened. It is making some of the right noises, but that does not mean that the Bill really satisfies the Consumers' Association of Canada, or that is going to meet the needs of consumers across Canada.

Mr. Domm: Mr. Speaker, I think, in fairness to the Consumers' Association of Canada the Hon. Member should give his source of information. If the Hon. Member has been advised that it was told to take it or lump it, then I would like to know who advised him that that was the position of the Consumers' Association of Canada, which last summer in July and August endorsed the Bill and asked for certain things which are included. The Hon. Member rises in this House and repeatedly tells us he has been advised under the table, from a brown envelope or somehow, that the Consumers' Association of Canada has said it was told to take it or lump it. Would the Hon. Member be more specific? Who said to take it or lump it?

Mr. Nystrom: I was told by Blaikie.

Mr. Manly: The Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) told the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom), and I heard it right from the horse's mouth.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blaikie: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Are there any further questions or comments? The time for questions or comments has now terminated. Resuming debate.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I thought the last interjection by the Hon. Member for Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands (Mr. Manly) that he received his information from the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) was a pretty good indication of the depth of the research the New Democratic Party put into this Bill. I note the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) said that he was also involved in this research into the Consumers' Association of Canada.

Mr. Blaikie: Believe it or not, Don.

Mr. Blenkarn: But, seriously, Mr. Speaker, when a Member of Parliament impugns an association like the Consumers' Association of Canada, that Member of Parliament is doing damage to a voluntary association. He should prove that it has said it has not been given a fair hearing, totally disapproved of the Bill and that it was told to lump it or leave it. That is a pretty serious accusation against a very valid association. To make that accusation and refuse to back it up is certainly, in my view, not the kind of thing we should expect from Hon. Members in this Chamber.

Some attack was made with respect to our philosophy in connection with competition. I want to make it very clear to this House, particularly to the New Democratic Party, that we believe very strongly in the private marketplace. But, we believe that the private marketplace should be open and free for competition amongst various parties in the private marketplace. It is our philosophy and our hope that there will be as many active competitors in the marketplace as possible. We do not, quite frankly, enjoy having to use the state, which really amounts to bureaucrats and the dictatorship of the state, to try to force the divestiture or control of businesses. What we want to do is create a climate whereby there is as much open competition as possible. Let it be very clear that if we cannot by persuasion create a climate of openness of competition, then we will not resist using the powers of the state. That also is the philosophy of this Party.

I want to point out to the Hon. Member, because he said some things about Members of the Conservative Party making some statements concerning the Genstar and Imasco matter, that not just Members of the Conservative Party but all of the Members of the Finance Committee last evening endorsed a resolution asking the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall), who introduced Bill C-103, to block the Imasco takeover of Canada Trust. The Progressive Conservative Party is taking the lead on this whole question. We did not hear a thing from Members of the New Democratic Party for weeks and weeks, in fact, not until yesterday in Question Period in the House of Commons. They finally caught on to the fact that, perhaps, non-financial institutions would take over a very major financial company.