

Combines Investigation Act

an expression of hope that as to the substance of the matter contained in the Senate amendment, which we think had much to recommend itself, the government will give consideration to that matter with a view perhaps to bringing in next year the kind of amendment which the Senate submitted to the house and which we thought was an improvement. However, as far as the procedure is concerned, we think that nothing should be done which can infringe in any way the rights and privileges of this house by Senate action. As I have said, we are therefore gratified that the government has taken the course we recommended the other day.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): On behalf of this group, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we are very pleased indeed that the Minister of Finance has made this announcement tonight. In so doing, he has shown a willingness to support the argument put forward by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) on behalf of this group, when he first introduced the legislation. It is another illustration of the effectiveness of the opposition.

Motion agreed to.

COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT**AMENDMENTS RESPECTING REPRESENTATIONS ON PRICES, ETC.—APPLICATION TO FISHING AGREEMENTS**

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice) moved the second reading of Bill No. C-70, to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Criminal Code.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill has been the subject of discussion between representatives of the various parties and has also, as you will recall, been the subject of an earlier statement by myself as to our intentions with respect to its disposition. On July 7 I made a statement as to the government's intention and at that time indicated that by leave of the house I intended to divide the bill, leaving over for next session those portions of the original bill which deal with amendments to combines, mergers and monopolies provisions, leaving for consideration at this session only the portions dealing with small businesses and an additional section introduced on that date to take care of a situation arising in the fisheries industry in British Columbia as a result of the report of the director of investigation and research under the Combines Investigation Act. Accordingly, our original bill was dropped and a new bill, namely Bill No. C-70 now before the house, was introduced.

This bill consists of four clauses. The first three are those dealing with the situation of small businesses. First, there is a clause to deal with misleading advertising; second, a clause to deal with the situation arising under section 34 of the present Combines Investigation Act; and, third, a clause dealing with unfair pricing practices. Then the fourth clause is the one introduced to take care of the fisheries situation in British Columbia.

Since that time—that is, since July 7 when I made my previous statement—I have to advise the house that I have received a number of further representations, both from members of the house itself and from organizations throughout the country, to the effect that the provisions of the first three clauses, while important and while dealing with an urgent situation, nevertheless require further consideration. I have received representations from such organizations as the Co-operative Union of Canada pointing out that in their view the bill in its present form would confront them with certain problems about which they are gravely concerned. As I have said, other organizations as well as members of parliament have represented that the bill requires a great deal of study and should have further consideration.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that the interest and concern which have been shown in connection with this bill are to me an indication of the importance of the subject matter with which it deals. This bill, as it now stands with respect to the first three clauses, is an attempt—and I believe it will be an effective and useful attempt—to deal with extremely grave difficulties now confronting small businesses in this country.

I would have liked to proceed with the bill at this session for the reason which I indicate, namely the urgency of the problem which confronts these small businesses. But by reason of the importance of the situation and of the importance of our economy of maintaining the maximum number of small, independent private enterprises, I consider it is our duty to ensure that the legislation we introduce be in the best, most effective and most workable form.

Therefore, in view of the number of representations I have received—I must say I have had some criticisms, although the criticisms have been outnumbered by the constructive and helpful suggestions—as to the desirability of further consideration of some changes which might be made, I consider that to proceed with the bill at this stage of the session would not be helpful in view of the obvious proximity of the closing of the