

*Competition Tribunal Act*

The Hon. Member spoke of a new era of consultation. Why did the Minister allow the Gang of Five literally to draft this legislation? Why did the Minister allow big business to bulldoze this legislation across his desk? On the other hand, why did he reject some of the major recommendations of the consumer organizations in Canada? Is this indicative of who, in effect, is calling the shots with respect to Bill C-91?

[Translation]

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, as usual the Hon. Member for York South-Weston (Mr. Nunziata) "buzzes" through with an obvious lack of consideration of the whole issue.

Mr. Speaker, there was consultation. Canadian consumers were consulted, over a hundred briefs were submitted at the federal-provincial conferences at which all Canadian provinces were represented. People submitted—

Of course, your Government at the time could not know about that, because it had no notion of consultation. It never did know what it was. For 20 years, there were only groups of five, four, three, ten . . . Our Government has been involved in true consultation with the Canadian people. If I may . . . You listed them a while ago, Mr. Speaker, but rightly or wrongly, probably by mistake, about a hundred papers which have been tabled were not mentioned; there have been consultations with the provinces, with the Business Council on National Issues, with the Consumers' Association of Canada, with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and with the Canadian Bar Association.

It was ridiculous to say that when the time came to amend the Criminal Code, criminals were consulted . . . That is ridiculous, and a comparison so insignificant that it does not even deserve to be mentioned in this forum. These people are working in the interest of Canadians. What our Government is doing is relying on Canadians, on associations made up of Canadians. You should stop seeing groups, whether on the business level or whatever, as enemies of the Canadian people. This is over now, because our Government trusts the Canadian people.

● (1640)

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate.

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that I have been through this process before. I recall when the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) was the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I remember his words very well when he was piloting that Bill through the House. I remember his quote in *The Globe and Mail* when the Bill was finally passed when he said, "I hope this Bill will never have to be used". I think he can rest assured that it has not been used very much. Certainly it has never been abused.

Here we are dealing with C-91, the great great grandson of Bill C-256. This Bill is called the competition policy. Here is a Conservative Government, and before it was a Liberal

Government, both dedicated to the free market system, to free enterprise, to initiative, and here is this Government that is the arch representative of that kind of philosophy. The Government keeps telling us that that is what the system is based on, and that these businesses out there in the market-place are only willing to compete.

I ask myself why it is necessary that a Government has to force people to compete. I asked that question and I said to myself, well now, let me read this Bill and find out if that is what actually is going to happen. Is that just the cosmetology of the thing or is this just the trimmings and the window dressing to give the impression to the people at large that this Government really is interested in competition policy?

In fact that Party over there that is the Government, which is so dependent on corporate contributions—in fact we only have to see the recent convention in Quebec where the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Côté) got the Conservative Party off the hook and guaranteed it its corporate contributions—that in fact postponed limitation of corporate contributions to the Conservative Party. This is the same Minister that has introduced Bill C-91. This is the Government that wants the consumers and the public at large to believe that it is really interested in taking on corporate concentration, and really forcing the corporations that act like white sharks out in the market-place, as opposed to hammer-head sharks, to give the consumer a fair shot.

My colleague, the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata), who consulted on this Bill called them the Gang of Five. They were the ones, all the corporate elite in this country, advising the Government on consumer policy on a Bill that is designed to give consumers in the market-place some protection. That is equivalent to asking the chickens to expect Colonel Sanders will look out for their interests. That is the height of impunity.

I remember when Bill C-42 was before the House and it was a little bit better than this one. The Conservatives, led by the now Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens), Chairman Sinc, late of South Korea, fought that toothless tiger, Bill C-42, into submission, and the Liberals rolled over and they were not too anxious to get any kind of tough legislation on the books. They said, "We are held up to ransom, we give up". Mr. Speaker, they lay down. They surrendered. They were only too anxious to surrender because they were getting heat from the corporate world that their contributions were going to be cut off. It was called the silent surrender. What we have here is a watered-down version of Bill C-42. That one was a toothless tiger; this Bill C-91 is a roaring rabbit.

Why have we New Democrats opposed it? We see right through the flimsy *négligé* of Bill C-91 and we strip it away. We want to point out that if you are going to have competition policy in this country then it has got to be tough. I do not see why they always say they can never accept the position that the Government should be dominant in the business community and in the market-place. That is the problem. Why then