

Competition Tribunal Act

● (1510)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by extending, on behalf of everyone, congratulations to the Minister on the reason for his having to return to Prince Edward Island. I know the birth is imminent; I do not know whether it has happened or not. In any event, we wish mother, child and father well.

Having said that about the Minister, I want to say a word about his performance in his portfolio. I think he had an easy go of it at the start because he followed the Hon. Member for Rosemont (Mrs. Blais-Grenier). There was a great willingness within the environmental community and the House to give him the benefit of the doubt for some time. I must say with a great deal of personal regret that that honeymoon is coming to an end.

A pattern in environmental policy is beginning to emerge. This pattern consists of many things, some of which have already been mentioned; including the gag order on the Department, the failure to restore cuts made by the former Minister to the toxicology centre, the wildlife service and others, the cessation of traditional assistance to environmental groups, the fact that we celebrated the anniversary of Canada's National Parks without the creation of a single new National Park, the acceptance by the Minister of no American action on acid rain and the Niagara River, the acceptance by the Minister of positions of which he was formerly critical in this latter respect, and the tendency to lean on advertising as a solution.

We saw \$1 million spent on Environment Week itself, something I was reluctant to criticize in principle because I have nothing against attempting to stimulate public awareness of the environment. However, when this is juxtaposed with the failure to spend in other areas where it is very important to spend money, one must be a bit skeptical. A million dollars is being spent on advertising to discourage Canadians from using leaded gas when a simple adjustment to the tax structure might have had a more immediate effect, and might even have raised a few dollars for the Government. In all this we see a disturbing trend of having the responsibility shifted from Government to individuals, and we see this in the statement the Minister just made.

The Government talks about what individuals need to do. I do not quarrel with the fact that all individual Canadians have a part to play, but it would be a serious mistake indeed if during Environment Week, statements that tend to downplay the role of Government in protecting the environment were to go by without comment. It is not simply a question of education and individual lifestyles. It is a fact that if all of the companies referred to in the statement started being environmentally responsible today most of our problems would be solved. However, they are not going to do that until Canada has a Government that is willing to stand up to the vested corporate and bureaucratic interests that are making money out of pollution and are meeting their short-term economic

goals. That is where the fundamental contradiction in the Conservative Party's policy on the environment lies.

The Government cannot have an economic philosophy based on deregulation and on letting business do its own thing if it hopes to meet our environmental concerns. Companies that pollute for short-term economic goals are doing the very thing which, through other rhetoric, the Conservative Government is encouraging them to do.

I believe the position we heard today from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) on behalf of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) is riddled with errors. Sure, the Ethiopian example is an environmental problem, but many of the environmental problems in the Third World and elsewhere are related to economic problems. They are related to the things Third World countries have to do because of their debt relationships and the kinds of economies they have developed as a result of investment patterns on the part of the First World. These are fundamental global economic questions which we are not going to solve until Canada has a Government that is willing to resist the way the market-place works both here and abroad. That is not the kind of Government we have now.

If Canadians, as a result of this week and perhaps even as a result of the advertising campaign, are concerned about the environment and want a political solution to that concern, I say to them that they are not going to find it on that side of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I wish to inform the House that because of the Ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 14 minutes, beginning at 5 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMPETITION TRIBUNAL ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-91, an Act to establish the Competition Tribunal and to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Bank Act and other Acts in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and Motion No. 8 (Mr. Orlikow) (p. 13991).

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate, I would like to make a few comments about the amendment put forward by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow).

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, motion No. 8 asks the following:

That Bill C-91—

—now under consideration—

—be amended in Clause 47 by striking out line 36 at page 51 and substituting the following therefor: