

Competition Bill

flour, 150 per cent increase in profit; Silverwood Industries, 83 per cent.

Taking the 12 companies sampled in this *Financial Post* survey, the average increase in profits has been 59.6 per cent. No provision whatsoever is made, either in the Combines Investigation Act or by the Food Prices Review Board structure, or through any section of the minister's department, to protect the consuming public against that situation. Then, on top of all that—and this comes home to roost for both Liberals and Conservatives—these companies were the beneficiaries of the reduction in the corporation tax from 47 per cent to 40 per cent. Then, as an added bonus, consider this. Did these companies increase the number of their employees? Not from any look at the statistics. Did they build new plants? Not that anybody can find out. They stuck these profits in their pockets, a gift from the Canadian taxpayer. Not only did we give George Weston an 86 per cent increase in profits, but we said things were so bad that we would cut the percentage of income tax they would pay on top of that.

What this means also is that to the extent that these food processors are foreign-owned and pay dividends on their profits to their parent company outside the land, they are taking the money of Canadian taxpayers, as a result of the reduction to 40 per cent in the corporation tax rate, and stacking it into dividends that they pay. We the taxpayers of Canada are giving our hard earned tax money in the form of dividends to multinational corporations headquartered elsewhere. I say that is a shame and a disgrace.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Gray) has now come into this House with a bill that has had a long period of pregnancy and is insipid, ineffective, and will become meaningless within a matter of just a few months. If there are good features in it in terms of preserving the position of the general public without further encroachment upon their pocket books, its provisions have been so well publicized that corporations have now found ways of getting around them. As for those who have not, they will continue the policy started by Mr. Henry when he was director of research and investigation of holding meetings with the director to ascertain how far they can go in instituting their policies and still stay within the law. I hope when the committee gets this bill it will be able to straighten it out because it is really not of much value the way it stands now.

● (1630)

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, I welcome in principle the amendments introduced to the Combines Investigation Act presently before this House, and in particular the fact that there appears to be some priority given to consumer protection aspects of a competition policy, an area which has in the past been the subject of our party's attack upon this government.

No doubt members will welcome the opportunity to discuss the many areas encompassed by these proposed amendments, inasmuch as there are many questions which still remain unanswered and many areas of this bill which must be enlarged upon, particularly proposed Section 32.3 which would bring amateur and professional sports under the jurisdiction of the Combines Investigation Act for the

[Mr. Howard.]

first time. I welcome the principle of protection in some semblance to athletes and teams as well, something that has for too long been lacking in this country. However, the proposed legislation, particularly in this part, represents only a start on what can and should be a comprehensive undertaking, not just a superficial scratching of the surface.

What is of prime concern to me is the overpowering slanting of this bill, not toward the amateur who is really most in need of these kinds of guidelines, but toward the already established professional who has attained stability and financial security in the marketplace of athletes, and the teams themselves who have at their disposal vast legal and monetary resources. What is of prime concern to me, and should be of prime concern, to every member of this House is that the youth of this country be afforded every conceivable opportunity not only to participate in sports and become physically as well as mentally proficient, but be afforded as well the opportunity to participate in Canadian professional sports without taking a back seat to United States superiority in Canada. At the same time, they should be protected in their choice of team and league.

At the present time in our own Canadian Football League almost 50 per cent of every team is composed of United States players, not to mention the over 75 per cent United States content as far as staff and coaching is concerned. Allow me to quote from today's Toronto *Daily Star*, from a column by the sports editor of that paper, Jim Proudfoot:

Next time there's a coaching or managerial vacancy, hire a Canuck. Edmonton Eskimos haven't done badly with a Canadian general manager, you know. And lots of Canadian coaches could do the job in the CFL if they just cultivate southern accents.

The myth about Canadian inferiority has been kept alive by coaches mostly, who'd sooner bring in a ready-made halfback from Georgia Abnormal than tutor a talented kid from Wilfred Laurier.

Canadians who got the opportunity have always been capable of stardom at the highest level; Tony Gabriel, Jim Corrigan, Tom Forzani, Bill Baker and Lorne Richardson were all-stars last fall in positions usually occupied by immigrants.

If Mr. Lalonde hasn't extracted a pledge along the above lines, he's simply wasting his time with this whole exercise—simply deciding which American players Canadians can watch.

I agree 100 per cent with that sentiment. It is a strange paradox that, on the one hand, we have the government submitting a bill which it alleges will stimulate competition and, on the other hand, we have the same government threatening to introduce a bill to prevent competition. Of course, I am referring to the contradictions between the bill before us, submitted by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Gray), and the widely publicized recent statements by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), in which he emphatically and repeatedly says that his government will do everything in its power to keep the Toronto Northmen of the newly formed World Football League out of Canada in order to protect the Canadian Football League. What could be more contradictory? How can a government possibly introduce two such conflicting philosophies? Has this government forgotten that this country was built on free enterprise, and has this government forgotten that this country was built on competition? Why did the Minister of National Health and Welfare then pick this particular