referring not only to corporate concentration in a political sense but to the fact that more and more of the control of the Canadian economy is falling into fewer and fewer hands. When more and more economic power falls into fewer and fewer hands, those few hands are given some significant political muscle as well.

When we consider that about 50 per cent of the value of stocks traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange are controlled by nine Canadian families, a picture begins to emerge of corporate concentration which would never be tolerated in most industrialized nations. Even the United States, that bastion of capitalism, has sufficient anti-combines legislation which would not enable the extent of corporate concentration that has become a reality in Canada to occur in that country.

Year after year attempts have been made by various Governments, particularly successive Liberal Governments, to bring forward legislation which would tend to restrict corporate concentration. However, inevitably, because of the corporate lobby, successive Liberal administrations have never brought a significant piece of legislation to the floor of the House of Commons.

Today we are debating Bill C-91. While it may be recognized as a step in the right direction, it really has insufficient teeth to make any significant dint in the trend toward corporate concentration in Canada. Obviously takeovers in this country have been increasingly dramatically; mergers and takeovers are accelerating. In the 1960s the average number of takeovers per year were 253. During the 1970s that increased to 382 corporate takeovers on an annual basis. In the 1980s—and we can only measure what happened in the first half of this decade—it would appear that about 522 corporate takeovers per year have already occurred, which indicates a significant acceleration. This means that more and more of the economic activity within Canada is being controlled by fewer and fewer corporations.

Since 1975, the hundred largest companies in Canada have been involved in more than 150 mergers and takeovers, and more than 25 per cent of the growth of these large companies has been from financial transactions rather than the development of new products or new growth in the market-place, so to speak. At a time when we ought to be more concerned than we are in terms of finding ways and means of providing employment for unemployed Canadians—and in my estimation the track record of the Government in this regard is rather abysmal—we see corporate takeovers and mergers taking place. This almost inevitably results in a net loss of jobs. As corporations take over other corporations, they are not creating any new business. They are not creating any new enterprises, any new product lines or new jobs. They are simply concentrating their economic power.

The most insidious type of takeover and merger is the one which is on our minds today, that is, the takeover by Imasco of Genstar. What is particularly insidious about it is that it is an example of a non-financial institution, which has vast holdings, taking over one of the largest financial institutions in Canada. Let me quote the chairman of the Finance Committee, the Hon. Member for Missisauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) who said, "Imasco is buying a bank".

• (1120)

We have seen this trend develop in the last while with Branscan, Trilon, Power Corporation and the Power Financial Corporation, with financial and non-financial institutions merging and melding. The concern is that this will give some unfair advantage to the corporate giants which have their own financial institutions. Self dealing will inevitably result.

There are many classic cases of self dealing, of conflict of interest, when unscrupulous corporate leaders have taken advantage of their access to financial corporations in which they own major shares. We do not have to go any further than the famous Leonard Rosenberg and his trust company, Seaway, Greymac and Crown Trust. They were making loans to other interests of Rosenberg that were totally inappropriate in terms of using depositors' money.

If Imasco is allowed to control the largest trust company in Canada, the sixth largest financial institution in Canada, namely Canada Trustco, will this enable Imasco in its operations to have special opportunities in the free market place? I think the concern of every Member of Parliament here is that in fact it would.

Having sat on the Finance Committee now for a number of years, let me suggest that there are hardly any issues on which all of the members of the Finance committee agree. I can recall only three or four instances where the collective members, reflecting all the political Parties in the House of Commons, agreed. One of those issues was that we should not permit financial institutions and non-financial institutions to meld, particularly when the ownership was over 10 per cent. There was a unanimous motion of the committee to that effect in its report. It was a unanimous motion of the committee the other night when it examined the Imasco Genstar situation.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, on that committee are some very thoughtful and experienced financial people. We heard witnesses from the trust companies and from the financial industries of Canada. People made the point very clearly. After a great deal of thoughtful pondering and reflection members of the Finance committee unanimously agreed that the action we are seeing take place in Canada today, the takeover by Imasco of Genstar is not in the best interests of Canada or Canadians.

The other night in the Finance committee I put that very question to the Superintendent of Insurance, Mr. Robert Hammond, who is responsible for monitoring and supervising the trust companies of Canada. He is probably one of the most knowledgeable individuals when it comes to trust companies and the role they play in the Canadian economy. I asked him if, in his opinion, this particular type of takeover was in the best interests of Canada. His answer was that he could not identify any compelling reasons to make that case. I am