

was ostensibly drafted. For years there has been talk about the need to bring that legislation up to date. Repeatedly, on this side of the House, members of all parties have talked of the adverse effects of combines. There have been innumerable court cases in which some of the most respected firms in Canada engaging in various fields of economic endeavour have been prosecuted and convicted for violating the provisions of the anti-combines legislation. Despite this, Mr. Speaker, the available evidence shows that combines are more prevalent than ever, that they are more effective than ever, and that they continue to be detrimental to the Canadian people. This government announced some time ago that it was studying the question and that new legislation would be brought in at an early date.

The Economic Council was asked to make a study of combines. That study was to relate to the proposed legislation. The Economic Council presented an interim report. I do not want to refer to what is said in the interim report except to point out that, while making its review, the Economic Council received a large number of submissions from important organizations in business, labour and, I suppose, of the academic community, about the problem Canada faces in connection with monopolies and combines.

I am one who believes in that about which the minister has spoken so often since entering public life. I believe in participatory democracy. I believe in letting people know the facts so that they can give reasonable consideration to the problems we face and decide intelligently what can be done. I submit that this cannot be done if the government, whenever it proposes to act, proceeds to make inquiries, proceeds to call for studies and to ask for submissions, and then takes the view that all the material that has been gathered is its private property and that there is good reason for keeping the information secret. I submit that very seldom are there reasons for keeping such detailed information from the public. I am not talking just about Members of Parliament. The ordinary citizens of Canada, the press, the radio and those in television as well as Members of Parliament, ought to have the right to look at the record, to see the arguments advanced for and against a certain proposal, and to make a reasoned judgment as to why certain things should be done or not done. That is what I propose in my notice of motion for the production of papers. The government has refused to comply.

May I take a few moments to point out what has been happening in this country in recent years. Mr. W. F. Lindsay of the merger and monopoly branch of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs supplied certain relevant information to Marc Eliesen, Director of Research for the New Democratic Party, on the subject of mergers. I wish to look at the record and to show how many mergers have taken place in the last few years and how greatly accelerated the rate of mergers has become. According to Mr. Lindsay's report, in 1962 there were 185 mergers; in 1963 there were 129; in 1964, 204; in 1965, 235; in 1966, 203; in 1967, 228; in 1968, 402 and in 1969, the last year for which there are figures, there were 504 mergers. If we look at the rate at which foreign compa-

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nies are taking over or merging with Canadian companies, we cannot help but be alarmed. All this is taking place at a time when the government has designated a minister to look at the question of foreign ownership and how it affects Canada.

The figures show, for example, that in 1962 there were 79 foreign takeovers; in 1963, there were 41; in 1964, there were 80; in 1965, there were 78; in 1966, there were 80 such takeovers; in 1967, there were 85; in 1968, there were 163 and in 1969, there were 168. We must remember that, in most cases, American corporations are taking over our particularly large companies. Increasingly, American business interests are taking over the most important segments of the Canadian economy. This concerns the people of Canada more and more. It is a problem about which every political party in Canada is concerned. Both the Ontario Liberal party and the Ontario Conservative party are discussing this problem more and more. We, of the New Democratic Party, are not alone in our concern about the increasing control exercised by United States interests of many facets of the Canadian economy. I know that Members of Parliament are aware of the fact that the oil industry, the mining industry, as well as a host of other fields in the Canadian economy, are controlled now almost exclusively by United States concerns. For this reason, we feel that the entire question of combines—and I submit that combines are usually formed to thwart the will of the Canadian consumer—ought to be looked at. We feel that they must be controlled. We feel that the formation of combines such as we have witnessed, Mr. Speaker, must be severely controlled or stopped.

We have called on the government to modernize, to refurbish and to rewrite the entire anti-combines legislation. We are glad that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) has promised that there will be legislation along that line. We welcome it. I do not say that we shall welcome his proposals; yet we welcome the opportunity to discuss the whole question. Without taking too much of the time of the House may I say, very simply, that we feel we, and the people of Canada, have a right to discuss this question and that we have a right to know all the facts. That is why it is essential that we have the kind of information which was supplied to the Economic Council of Canada for the report which they made. I see no reason why the government has refused in this and many other cases to give the information requested. There can be no other reason for their secrecy except the arrogant feeling of the government that only they are entitled to the facts before they decide on issues and policies, and before they introduce legislation.

• (5:10 p.m.)

I urge the government to reconsider its refusal to supply the information which I requested and to table the submissions made to the Economic Council of Canada on combines and competition.

Mr. Allen B. Sulatycky (Rocky Mountain): I gather from the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) that his main concern in moving