

*Competition Tribunal Act*

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about Bill C-91 which was introduced by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post (Mr. Côté). In the light of the Minister's past experience with respect to consumer protection, particularly concerning Quebec's oil industry, I would suggest this is another failure and most Canadians simply cannot have confidence in him. He may be very pleasant and a real gentleman, but unfortunately he is a Minister from Quebec and, in this Government, he has no clout. He is powerless and did not even budge when he and all Quebecers were held up to ridicule here in the House of Commons by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney). And, on behalf of I do not know whom, this man who claims to be Minister of Consumer Affairs—I think he has a tendency to protect companies more than consumers—has introduced a Bill which is incomplete and does not provide enough consumer protection.

As in many other cases, Mr. Speaker, we get the Bill after certain deals have been made. I am referring to the oil industry. We all remember the famous O'Farrell report which was tabled by this Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post and in which it was clearly established that Quebec's refineries would not operate at full capacity—against the best interests of Quebecers—if the Government endorsed and approved the proposed sale of the Montreal East Gulf refinery to Ultramar.

Mr. Speaker, at a press conference the Minister made a firm commitment eight times in response to Ministers that he would make the report public the following Friday. The press conference was held on Wednesday, and I was there. On Thursday morning, the day after the press conference, the Minister just did not have anything more to say and we finally got the report long after the time it should have been released for useful debate. The Government did nothing to prevent what will be described in Quebec's history as a barbaric move against Quebecers: it approved a deal enabling a foreign company to buy a refinery—yet there were prospective Canadian buyers—only to shut it down, throw 450 Montreal East workers out on the street and, worse still, eliminate the competition which was the protection of Quebec consumers.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Government speaks about a tribunal in this bill. How will this tribunal be constituted and how will its members be appointed? In view of all that has happened since September 4 as concerns patronage, corruption and appointments, and of all the mistakes made by Ministers and other members of this Government, how can we of the Opposition trust these people and still be serious about our responsibilities to our constituents and the Canadian people? How can we trust these people who will make appointments strictly for political reasons when we know that the great majority of those appointed by this Government will be representatives of the industry who care nothing about the consumers and who think only about their profits?

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has introduced this bill and we know that he will soon be tabling other amendments concerning drugs which will go against the interests of consumers. It is a fact that large companies, multinationals are putting pressure on this Government and it is true that the friends of Brian carry a lot of weight and have a lot of money. Mine do not, but they are sincere, honest and ordinary people. They are consumers.

**An Hon. Member:** You are all angels in Sainte-Marie.

**Mr. Malépart:** The best proof of this, Mr. Speaker . . . the Hon. Member has just said that all the people in Sainte-Marie are angels. In fact, everyone read in the newspapers about the \$7 million winners in Sainte-Marie. We had a good proof of the honesty of these people when someone found the winning ticket and brought it back to its rightful owner and the winnings were shared equally. This clearly shows the honesty and generosity of poor people. They could have made a token gesture like people in high society often do and given a mere \$50,000 while keeping \$7 million for themselves, but they shared this money equally, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know that in committee my colleagues, the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) and the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand), who have much experience in this area, with the support of consumers associations, will make suggestions and fight to amend this Bill for the purpose of improving it.

Mr. Speaker, there are several reasons why the Bill as introduced is unacceptable, not only because of its lack of substance or effectiveness, and because of the way cases will be heard and people will be appointed to the Tribunal, but especially because of the lack of confidence Canadians have in this Conservative Government generally and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in particular.

Mr. Speaker, all polls indicate clearly, over and over again, that Canadians have no confidence or, to use an expression which everybody can understand, cannot "trust" this team and especially the Prime Minister. That is why the Liberal Party will do its utmost to force the Government to give this Bill some credibility, to ensure that, through an appointment formula, consumers in every region—Canada is a large country and people in Quebec think differently from those in Alberta and have different concerns—are duly represented on this committee. We must not let the Government alone appoint the people on this committee, for they would then be strictly large corporation people.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude with this, because there are in my party a number of my colleagues who know this subject better than I do and who have some comments to make. But I want you to know that over the next few days and weeks, the Liberal Party will fight, under the leadership of my colleagues and friends the Hon. Member for Papineau and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East, to ensure that, once adopted, the Bill will protect first and foremost consumers' interests.