

*Competition Bill*

selling cocktail mixes. The large food chains might say to you, "We will only handle one brand; if you want us to handle your brand you must pay us \$12,000 for a one-year contract, and we will handle it exclusively. You will also need to take advantage of our advertising deals, and so on." That is how they treat suppliers. It means that the consumer has no choice in product. Meanwhile, the price of that product must surely be affected because of the front end cash payment for one chain to handle it exclusively. I hope this practise will be considered later in committee.

Let me refer to something which is foremost in people's minds, especially in view of the difficulties we have been witnessing in connection with the sale of locomotives to Cuba by Montreal Locomotives Worthington. There have been difficulties with United States laws. I think it is excellent that the bill provides that where, foreign judgments, laws or directives are found to be contrary to the Canadian public interest, the commission may make orders that forbid their implementation in Canada. At last, we will clear up that inequity.

● (1610)

One of the major principles of this bill, one which, as I understand it, will not come into effect at the same time as the other measures, has to do with the whole area of competition and consumer protection in relation to services. The inclusion of services in the bill reflects the growing importance of this sector of the Canadian economy. Formerly, though some services related to goods were included, services of any description are now covered. The minister has explained that the proclamation of the law, to the extent that it relates to agreement in restraint of trade in the service sector, may be brought into force at a later date in order to afford an opportunity to discuss any problems which might arise and find an equitable way of setting out the regulations. Even so this vast area will at last be included in competition and consumer legislation.

I turn, now, to the section which says that in the field of professional and amateur sports it shall be an offence to combine or arrange with another person to limit reasonable opportunities for a person to participate in a sport or to negotiate with a team of his choice. This will not mean there will be no contractual rights. It will not mean that the richest franchise in a particular sport can buy out all the best players in other teams. But there is some muscle here to be sure there is not the kind of human horse-trading which often takes place in our sport today, particularly in junior or amateur sports where young people are involved. For the first time, provision is made within this bill for civil action to be taken in the courts by anyone adversely affected by violations of this legislation. At last the consumer will have the right to fight for the return of his money and for justice to be done. It is a significant addition to the bill, and, I think, a rounding out of the measures taken to ensure fairness to consumers.

Another new provision would allow the director of investigation and research to make representations and call evidence before any federal board or commission with respect to the maintenance of competition whenever it would be relative to the matter being considered by the board. I believe this to be of particular significance. I see no reason why this provision would not apply to the work

[Mr. Fleming.]

of the Food Prices Review Board. In cases where the board wishes to conduct its investigations, it will now be empowered to work directly with the investigations branch. I hope this provision will be of major assistance in making the work of the Food Prices Review Board even more effective.

As I said when I began, Mr. Speaker, this is a list of important measures to put the Canadian market place into much better order. It means an end to the hustlers and the hucksters. There will always be some, of course, who will try to find a new way of deceiving the public but we are closing many of the doors which have been left open, and which have allowed their imaginative minds to devise various ways of duping consumers and avoiding existing laws. The bill has been the subject of lengthy discussion over a number of years, beginning back in 1966. It was before the last parliament, where it was considered at length. All groups affected were given the opportunity to consider the extent of its impact, and I believe the time has now come to act. I have spent almost half an hour describing the specific principles which will deal directly with the action of those who would take advantage of consumers in Canada. The passage of this bill will stop this exploitation. It has gone on for years. Schemes such as bait and switch, pyramid selling and referral selling have taken advantage of consumers for years. Surely, this is the point at which we should all co-operate in seeing that the bill is considered quickly and passed into law. All of us think of elections from time to time. After this measure is passed, members from any party represented here can stand on the hustings and say: I, as one member of parliament, have done this for you, the Canadian consumer.

**Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga):** Mr. Speaker, the philosophy of this bill demonstrates the radically different approach to prices, and the problem of consumers, between our party and the government. The government and its allies to my left look at the economy of Canada in the light of a past century. This is the light of the 19th century, when there was a free economy, when there were innumerable buyers and innumerable sellers, when there was genuine competition between many manufacturers and many distributors of goods. They say that this bill, and the tinkering it provides, will make sure that there will be real competition and that competition in itself will make prices fall, will provide the justice that consumers demand.

The reality of the 1970's is that we are in an age of oligarchy, big corporations, big business, big labour, where there is really no competition, an age in which, as the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) said, prices are determined by price leadership, by administrative policy, by administered terms of competition. We do not live in an open barter economy any longer. We do not live in an era where there are many steel companies, where there are many cement companies, where there are many automobile manufacturers and where these companies compete with one another individually in every sense.

We only have to consider the automobile industry to realize the misunderstanding of the nature of our society that this government and its allies in the New Democratic Party have. The automobile industry, for example, amounts to one company which basically controls the