

Concentrations of Power

or not private enterprise works for the individual or whether nationalization does?

Mr. Trudeau: I do not think the royal commission is moving into that direction. It will deal mainly with the concentration of economic power but if governments or socialist parties want to destroy or disperse their economic power in the manner suggested by the hon. member, that is their problem rather than ours.

[English]

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, while acknowledging the qualities of Mr. Robert Bryce, I should like to ask the Prime Minister why the government, again in this appointment as in the recent appointment of a senior executive officer of the CBC, has resorted to a man whose experience, while distinguished, has been predominantly in the public sector; and will some of the other commissioners have a private sector background, in light of the general mandate of this commission?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the whole intention of the royal commission is to take steps to increase the extent of the public interest in the economic system. It should not be unnatural, when it comes to public interest, that we have recourse to a very distinguished public servant. To answer the other part of the hon. gentleman's question, he may not have to wait too long before seeing who the other two commissioners are; but I understand he is making suggestions to me.

● (1530)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I propose to see three other hon. members before concluding this matter, the hon. member for York-Simcoe, the hon. member for St. John's East, and the hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister indicate whether he feels that the terms of reference of this royal commission will be sufficiently broad to enable a complete review and investigation of the Canadian banking situation, including the Canadian chartered banks whose aggregate assets have grown from about \$20 billion to \$100 billion since the last royal commission?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, it seems obvious to me, from the hon. gentleman's question, that he is indicating an area where there is a great concentration of corporate economic power indeed, and the answer undoubtedly will be yes.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister indicate, if he can, that the terms of reference of this royal commission will be sufficiently broad to cover Crown corporations and, in turn, is he contemplating setting up a further royal commission that perhaps would look into big government, such as the Glassco commission which looked into government expenditures in general?

Mr. Trudeau: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the opposition party should get itself together. When I announced this royal commission, some members of the party said "Another royal commission," and another member is already suggesting another one.

[Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue).]

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the appointment of this royal commission would indicate that the present Combines Investigation Act is inadequate—and there is nothing in the amendment now before the committee that would cover these inadequacies—I ask the Prime Minister if he would consider allowing the House to see phase two of the Competition Act, which would assist us in expediting passage of phase one which is now before the committee.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I really do not see why the hon. member has to know what the government intends to do one or two years down the road in order to make up his mind about what we are putting before the House now. If he wants to know the general direction of government thought, he can go back to the bill that was put before the House by the now Minister of National Revenue a couple of years ago which had two phases, one and two, in the same phase.

Mr. Saltsman: Mr. Speaker, the announcement of the establishment of a royal commission came as quite a surprise. One would have assumed that over the years the government would have made some decisions on this question of concentration. It seems to have made some decisions; it has been encouraging various forms of concentration in consortiums. On the occasions when ministers have been asked about the dangers of large corporations, they invariably have replied that the government has the power, can sort it out, and that we do not have to worry about it.

My question to the Prime Minister is a somewhat philosophical one; however, I believe it is a terribly important question. It deals with the terms of reference being given this royal commission. Does the Prime Minister intend to ask the royal commission to examine the question of power itself and who has it? Do the corporations have the power, as some people think, or does the government have the power and is simply failing to use it on the corporations? I think this is a pretty fundamental and important question, and unless this matter is given to the royal commission for examination it may simply concentrate on the assumption that it has not been done this way.

Mr. Trudeau: On the preamble to the question, Mr. Speaker, I confess that the government did not have a final position on this subject of concentration of economic power and whether it was or was not, in certain sets of circumstances, beneficial to Canadians generally. I confess the government's inadequacy in that regard. I think the hon. member would understand this, because I do not see coming from his party any great statements on concentrations of workers' power in trade unions, a subject to which the Leader of the Opposition referred. I think for the serious members of that party—I include, of course, the present House leader of the party—this is a very serious question, the question of concentration of economic power in trade unions. I repeat that our policy is not final on either one of these matters. We are tackling one aspect of it at this time. I hope the New Democratic Party can give us some inkling of its philosophy in respect of the other aspect of concentration of economic power.

The final part of the question has to do with power itself and whether or not the government has it. If this is what