

Competition Tribunal Act

social and not in the interests of the vast majority of Canadians. I believe this Bill requires further consideration. Therefore I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan (Mr. Angus):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-91, an Act to establish the Competition Tribunal and to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Bank Act and other Acts in consequence thereof, be not now read a second time but be read a second time this day six months hence.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is in order, therefore the debate is now on the amendment.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I rise to lead off the portion of the debate dealing with the amendment which will provide greater time for the kind of consultation should have occurred in the drafting of this Bill. It will give six months for the Government to meet with the groups who are really affected, the consumer groups of Canada. It is not big business, which has very successfully negotiated out of this Bill everything with teeth, who needs protection. It is the average Canadian consumer who goes to the corner store or supermarket, who buys a car or a service, who needs protection from the continual consolidation and empire-building we are seeing in this country. Nowhere is that more important than in the smaller communities across this land. People living there do not have the opportunity to go to two or three different supermarkets. They only have one. They are held captive to the pricing and marketing policies of that particular store. There is no competition. We have to give them time to have some input into the drafting of this Bill.

This process, I gather, started in the mid-1960s and was foiled time and time again by the vested interests of the big companies. They believe that free enterprise is the freedom to consolidate, to gobble up their competitors so that they and they alone are able to make decisions. We have seen them all across this land. We have seen company towns which go beyond the paper-mill or mine but do own the company store and the land. In some cases we believe very strongly that they think they own the people. We have to have a Bill which will allow them some kind of say, a Bill which will really provide teeth in our advertising laws so that consumers know exactly what they are getting. Right now only two of the six sectors in the Advertising Act are effective in any way. That certainly does not help the people of this country.

Throughout this debate we have heard from my colleagues who have suggested very strongly that the Bill before us is nothing more than a public relations exercise to try and give the people of Canada the impression that there are going to be new measures to protect them, to ensure that there is fair competition. However, what we have seen elsewhere in the Government should have led us to recognize the truth behind this Bill.

We have the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) moving to deregulate transportation; that is, to remove the rules so that Government can no longer direct the operations of

our transportation companies. We have, on the other hand, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) who has moved to take the rules off the game in terms of energy. It should be no surprise to us that we have Bill C-91, which, in effect, does not move to apply new and stronger rules into the operation of companies in this country.

● (1550)

This should not be a surprise as it is consistent with the philosophy of the Conservative Party. They are not prepared to go to bat for those Canadians, the average man and woman throughout this country who looks to the Government for some protection. They want to be protected from that ad that offers them a golden deal, whether it is on a car or on a tape deck or whatever, only to find when they have been enticed down to the store that it is not there, or it is not the way it was said to be. They need that kind of protection. It is the responsibility of Governments, whether at the federal, provincial or municipal level to provide that leadership so we can protect our consumers. We are not necessarily talking about dictating to companies how they conduct their business, but we are talking about ensuring that the rules of the game are fair, balanced and applicable to all.

I think we all have instances of lack of competition in our home community. We have one in Thunder Bay in broadcasting. Owned by one company we have a CBC television outlet, a CTV television outlet, an AM radio outlet, and an FM radio outlet, along with the local television listings. In radio we have competition. We have seen the value of aggressive competition in the improvement in the quality of services in radio. In addition to the one that is owned by the conglomerate, we have a separate AM commercial station, a local CBC outlet with local production, local news gathering, as well as CBC-FM. We have competition within the broadcasting industry in terms of radio. In terms of the listings for television radio we have competition both from the newspapers—the daily and the weekly—as well as from the publication put out by this company.

In television we have no local competition. We have seen over the years that the quality of the services provided are not anywhere near what they are in other communities. We have one news package. At six o'clock you can sit down in front of your TV in Thunder Bay and turn on either Channel 2 or Channel 4 and get the same news package. You do not get a comparison. There is no competition to outthrustle the other guy for television news. There is no competition to provide the best quality programming. Competition can be extremely beneficial to the consumers, whether they are consumers of television or radio, or consumers who are buying those necessities of life.

It is time that this Government took this Bill back, took the six months that we are prepared to give them to redo it and bring it back in a form that will very positively impact on consumers of this country, and that will finally tell big business what they can do with their tactics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.