

This Bill owes its effectiveness to the many who took a very active part in the reform process. The diligence of the Members of this House, of committee members and interested parties from all sectors has given us the potential to help ensure increased economic benefits for all Canadians. I now urge this House to support this Bill so that we may realize that potential as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet), I would indicate to Members that there are some people here who would like to hear the debate that is going on. If Members have other conversations to carry on, would they please take them behind the curtain.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to deal on third reading with Bill C-91. During consideration of this Bill by a Parliamentary Committee, we have come to realize that beyond political differences, it is sometimes possible for a group of Members to work together to improve a legislation.

On behalf of my Party, at the second reading stage, I had indicated that, in my opinion, this Bill was not the appropriate response to the competition problems in the Canadian economy, but that we all agreed that this Bill was a step in the right direction and that it was certainly better than the current legislation. We said at a time that we would try to move amendments in Committee to improve the legislation.

In light of the efforts made in Committee, I must say that I was agreeably surprised by the Government and by the Minister and his Parliamentary Secretary in particular, because they have accepted a fair number of the amendments I have proposed on behalf of organization representatives, consumers or individuals interested in Bill C-91 who appeared as witnesses before the Committee.

In its final form, Bill C-91 is not perfect, but thanks to the amendments proposed and accepted, I am more convinced now that this legislation is superior to the existing one. Therefore, I strongly believe that we would act irresponsibly if, as Members of this House, we did not take this opportunity to approve this Bill and give Canada and Canadians a legal framework in the area of competition. That is why, as Members of the Opposition, contrary to what happened in the past, we are willing to help the Government and cooperate with it to expedite the adoption of this Bill.

My position is especially important because, throughout the consideration of this Bill, one of my greatest concerns was to ensure that the interests of small and medium size businesses, and above all those of Canadians consumers would be taken into account. Mr. Speaker, my extensive political experience,

especially as Minister, former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, have convinced me that the current Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Côté) must have received additional representations from pressure groups, first of all on the Bill, and then during the study in Committee which saw the Bill being amended a number of times to reinforce its provisions.

I must state for the record that I am pleased with the attitude taken by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I want to congratulate him for standing up, and I want to tell the Minister to keep up the good works. I wish the Minister will not worry too much if he is assailed by people who are dissatisfied with the Bill, and indeed that he will not backtrack under pressures from some important pressure groups in Canada that might be a little disappointed at the passing of Bill C-91.

Especially, I ask the Minister not to backtrack because the legislation that will go through this House now will be sent to the Senate. This will be the last opportunity for large pressure groups to try and minimize the impact of the Act, and I hope the Minister will resist those last minute pressures.

● (1700)

To conclude, I would like to use my last remaining seconds to mention the most valuable help provided to me by some people. I would like to thank especially Mr. Mel Cappe, from Consumers and Corporate Affairs, who has been available, very open and very cooperative throughout the discussion of the Bill.

I would also like to thank Professor Stanbury, from the University of British Columbia, who for a number of years has been a leader in the analysis of this legislation in the academic community and who has inspired our work in Committee.

I would also like to thank Solicitor Gordon Kaiser, whose very important and worthwhile evidence has helped me in the consideration and preparation of the amendments to the Bill.

I must also mention the evidence given by Mr. Daniel Martin Bellemare, who is from the school of that great promoter of American consumers' rights, Ralph Nader, and brought to the Committee a refreshing point of view.

I also wish to thank Mr. Larry Wilson, who agree to give evidence and express the views of a member of a Commission responsible for examining the Competition Act and occasionally ruling on it.

I would have liked the Chairman or other senior members of the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission to give evidence on behalf of the Commission. Apparently this was impossible for a number of reasons, but, at any rate, I am grateful for the thrust and the quality of Mr. Wilson's evidence.