

● (1510)

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to discuss this question with the Postmaster General.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council) moved:

That the public accounts for the years ending March 31, 1972, and March 31, 1973, and the reports of the Auditor General thereon, together with the evidence adduced by the committee while considering the said matters in previous sessions of parliament, be referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

REFERENCE OF SYSTEM OF READJUSTING REPRESENTATION TO COMMITTEE ON PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council) moved:

That the system of readjusting representation in the House of Commons, including the method of determining the number of members for each province established by section 51 of the British North America Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Motion agreed to.

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COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING DEFINITIONS, ADMINISTRATION AND OFFENCES

The House resumed, from Thursday, March 14, consideration of the motion of Mr. Gray that Bill C-7, to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Bank Act and to repeal an act to amend an act to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, on resuming the debate on Bill C-7 I believe we should first realize that the government is using a rather featherlike approach in this bill. I suggest that the legislation will perhaps hurt competition rather than make it freer and easier in Canada. In a sense, the government is being quite naive in their approach concerning the matter. I suggest that there are four large elements bearing upon competition in Canada any one of which will have greater influ-

Competition Bill

ence on competition, its restriction or its freedom, than the legislation proposed by the government.

I refer, for example, to the foreign ownership of industry in this country and to the fact that in the international economic report of the President of the United States, tabled in February, 1974, we find there is listed total American investment in this country of \$44.1 billion. As we know, Mr. Speaker, there has been an incident in recent weeks affecting part of that investment. MLW-Worthington in Montreal, because they are 52 per cent owned by their parent in the United States have encountered some restriction with respect to a deal they hoped to make with Cuba, because of legislation now in force in the United States.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): What restriction was that?

Mr. Stevens: I understand it is still under review in the United States whether the parent company will be prosecuted if the subsidiary company goes ahead with the deal which they would like to make with the United States.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): With Cuba.

Mr. Stevens: Yes, with Cuba. I mention this because not only is this featherlike legislation but the Canadian government have followed a consistent policy of tolerating foreign investment and have encouraged it at every opportunity through the utilization of government funds to support such investment in Canada.

It is interesting to consider the record of the Export Development Corporation which this government proposes to enlarge further and to expand to a \$4 billion organization. I think it is interesting to note that that organization has been oriented by the government so that over 50 per cent of the benefit of their loan goes to foreign-controlled companies in Canada. The minimum loan from that organization is \$1 million, and we find that in 1972 the Export Development Corporation made loans on an average of \$23.3 million, while the Industrial Development Bank made loans on an average of \$45,000. The interest rate in the EDC, effectively, to foreign borrowers was approximately 7 per cent, while Canadian borrowers who turned to the International Development Bank paid 9.8 per cent.

I will demonstrate, Mr. Speaker, that this government does not know whereof they speak when they talk about competition in this country. If it is seriously suggested to the House that somehow this legislation will free competition and, as the Prime Minister has indicated—I am pleased to see he is still with us—that it will even contain inflation in this country, then I say God help this country if this is one of the pillars that the government intends to use to resist or to contain inflation.

With inflation at 9.1 per cent, I think it is time we demanded that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) brought in a budget to show us exactly what he intends in the way of fiscal and monetary measures to contain inflation over the coming months. For the Prime Minister or any of his ministers to suggest that somehow this legislation will help contain inflation is, I strongly suggest to