

Combines Investigation Act

on his amendment my hon. friend stated that I deliberately violated the provisions of the Combines Investigation Act, with the approval of the government. I say, sir, I did not deliberately violate the Combines Investigation Act, and I insist that my hon. friend accept that statement and withdraw the imputation.

Mr. Knowles: There are several things here, with some of which I shall agree in order to get along. I shall deal in a moment with what the minister said. First may I say that, if Your Honour does not stop me, I intend to speak for a few minutes more on the second reading of the bill, but not in reference to my amendment. Then when I reach the point where it seems necessary to argue the things set out in my amendment, I shall move it and send it to Your Honour.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I doubt if the hon. member is right in that attitude, since he has taken the precaution of saying "if I am not stopped". At this point I do not think he can go back and speak to the proposed amendment, but must limit his remarks to the motion for second reading.

Mr. Knowles: My good friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier) is getting excited unnecessarily. I said I would go back and confine my remarks to the second reading, and when I thought I could not talk longer without getting into this amendment, I would move it and send it to the Speaker to decide the point.

Some hon. Members: Go ahead.

Mr. Knowles: I come back to the question of the circumstances relating to the introduction and prosecution of this measure. Surely that is germane to the bill. I draw attention to the day on which notice was given. Surely it is germane to the bill to note the day on which the bill was introduced and given first reading, and to note other circumstances connected with it at that time.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, I cannot be asked to withdraw the imputation, which the Minister of Justice asked me to withdraw, about the deliberate violation of the act. The minister has admitted it and has taken responsibility for it. At one stage of the game he was relieved of that responsibility by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe), who said the whole cabinet agreed to it. At another stage he was relieved by the Prime Minister, who said he bore part of the responsibility.

What the Minister of Justice is now saying, Mr. Speaker, makes the circumstances connected with the introduction and prosecution of this measure more than ever an affront

to parliament. If a minister would rise in the house and say: We broke the law, but we felt that the circumstances were extenuating, and we throw ourselves on the mercy of the house, this debate would not continue. My friends opposite are laughing; they think the whole thing is a joke. I say that this is one of the most serious things that has happened in the parliament of Canada, indeed in any British parliament, in a long time.

I have in my hand a quotation from a publication which is as strongly opposed to the Combines Investigation Act as any publication could be. It is the *Letter-Review*, about the most reactionary publication that comes to the desks of members of parliament.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is hardly a fair observation.

Mr. Knowles: My friend does not think it is fair. All right. My point is that the editor, who does not like the provisions of the act in question, says that nevertheless the government has no excuse for violating those provisions. Let me quote his remarks directly.

But the cabinet certainly was not justified in flouting the law by withholding publication. In the old days, at least in Britain, the government would have gone down to defeat on the admission that it had deliberately broken the law.

I submit that I have made no misstatement, despite the request of the Minister of Justice to withdraw the imputation, and despite the statement of the Minister of Public Works that there are misstatements of fact in my remarks or in my amendment. I have said nothing that can be withdrawn, because I have stated plain facts which three ministers—the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Trade and Commerce and the Prime Minister—have admitted. My point is that—

Mr. Garson: Will the hon. member please refer to the page in *Hansard* on which any one of the ministers has admitted any such thing? He has made a statement that the admission has been made; now let him show where it is.

Mr. Knowles: Here is the first one I pick up. At page 2083 of *Hansard*, the following appears:

Mr. Knowles: Would the minister say whether at any point when he was thinking about this matter in January he saw anything in the law that gave him any authority not to publish it?

Mr. Garson: No.

Mr. Garson: That is not an admission.

Mr. Knowles: It is a clear-cut admission that the minister knew he had no authority not to publish that document.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it one o'clock?

Some hon. Members: No.