

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: I am sure of that; but the fact remains that the discussion was largely taken up by lawyers presenting their various views. There was continued insistence on the part of legal gentlemen. One or more expressed surprise, if not horror, at the possibility of someone with political bias being entrusted with the administration of this Bill, and, just before the committee adjourned, my good friend from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Côté) suggested: "Do not hold public hearings." Those are the words I took down, and I am sure the record will sustain my position.

Hon. Mr. COTE: May I ask the privilege of giving my own words? I said that a preliminary inquiry—not an investigation—should not be held in public.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: Let my honourable friend look at the record and see what he said.

Hon. Mr. COTE: The record will confirm what I say now.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: Some honourable senators opposite have expressed great horror at the possibility of the Commissioner, under direction of the Minister, going into an office of a company alleged to be a combine, examining books and papers and taking documents for his information. I understood several honourable gentlemen to hold up their hands in horror at the audacity of any proposal to do anything of that kind. I came to the conclusion, and I am firmly convinced, that certain honourable gentlemen have been arguing for one law for the big and wealthy law-breaker and another law for the poor fellow who steals a loaf of bread. The poor thief would be taken into court and a public hearing would be held. But as for the malefactor in high place who is trying to exact tribute in the form of thousands, perhaps millions, of dollars from consumers, producers or others, they assert he must not have a public hearing. It would reflect upon his integrity as a citizen, and you must not suggest anything that would be detrimental to him.

Let us see what authority you honourable senators in your wisdom have this session given to officials in various departments to do certain things in upholding the law. You passed a few days ago Bill 65, an Act respecting the Testing, Inspection and Sale of Seeds. Let us see what authority is given the inspector under that Bill—authority that you are not willing to give to somebody who, maybe, is after some distinguished gentlemen

for having conspired with one another to get unfair profits from the public. Section 16 of the Bill is in these words:

Any inspector charged with the enforcement of this Act may require a grower or dealer to take a statutory declaration in respect to seed presented to an inspector for grading and sealing in containers as may be prescribed by regulation, and may enter upon any premises to make any examination of any plants or seeds, in containers or in bulk, whether such seeds or plants are on the premises of the owner or on other premises, or in the possession of any carrier, and may take official samples therefrom for which samples the owner shall, on demand, be paid in accordance with the amount thus taken and its current value; further, he may make or have made any examination of books, invoices or other records to determine the truthfulness of advertising or public statements in respect to seed offered for sale.

A few days ago you passed also Bill 64, an Act to Control and Regulate the Sale of Feeding Stuffs. Let me give two sections of the Bill:

9. There may be appointed in the manner authorized by law such inspectors and analysts as the Minister may consider necessary for the effective carrying out of the provisions of this Act.

10. An inspector may at all reasonable times enter any premises in which he has reasonable cause to believe any feeding stuff is being or has been prepared for sale and may take for analysis samples of any feeding stuff there found on payment of the value of such samples.

Then, a few days ago, you passed another Bill, 119, an Act to amend The Excise Act, 1934, in which you gave authority to certain officers of the Government who might be actuated by political bias, according to the view of honourable gentlemen who were so insistent on such a possibility before the Banking and Commerce Committee. You stated in section 96 of that Bill:

Every one who, when called upon in the King's name by an officer of excise, to aid or assist him in the execution of any act or duty required by this Act, refuses or neglects so to do, and every master or person in charge of any vessel and every driver or person conducting or having charge of any vehicle or conveyance, who refuses or neglects to stop such vessel, vehicle or conveyance when required to do so in the King's name by an officer of excise, is guilty of an indictable offence, and liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars and not less than fifty dollars, and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months and not less than three months.

I cite these illustrations of the power which this Senate placed in the hands of inspectors and officers of the Government a few days ago without, I presume, any regard to the possibility of political bias on the part of those Government officials. Yet when it comes to the Combines Investigation Act