

*Combines Investigation Act*

into the month of January I would suggest that consideration might be given to the fact that many hon. members might like to know whether the house will be sitting when Mr. Churchill will be here, so this great exponent of our parliamentary system might be heard on the floor of this house, and when the people of Canada hear what he has to say they would know it was being said from a background similar in every way to that background with which he has so constantly been associated throughout his mature years. I merely put the suggestion forward. Its consideration will of course be related to the expectation of the Prime Minister as to when our business will be completed. And might I add, the time our business will be completed will be very largely governed by whether the government decides to carry forward this bill or to let it stand over until the next regular session of parliament.

**Mr. Speaker:** If the Prime Minister speaks now he will close the debate.

**Mr. St. Laurent:** I just wish to add a word to make it quite clear that there is not, nor is there likely to be, any intention on the part of the government not to proceed with this bill before parliament prorogues.

Motion agreed to.

**COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT****AMENDMENT TO FORBID THE FIXING OF SPECIFIC OR MINIMUM RESALE PRICES**

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Garson for the second reading of Bill No. 36, to amend the Combines Investigation Act, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Coldwell, and the amendment to the amendment of Mrs. Fairclough.

**Mr. J. M. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I should like first of all to say a word about the last comment made by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew), namely that when members are home, even though for a somewhat limited holiday, they might try to inform themselves as to the state of public opinion in their respective constituencies. I think it is fair to say that as far as evidence has come before the committee as yet, certainly from the experience on this side, so far as expressions of opinion from citizens are concerned, there have been many, many times as many opinions against the bill as in favour of it. I am not overlooking the fact that a good many of these opinions came from interested parties. But on the other hand I think it is fair to say that as time goes on there is more and more evidence from people who are interested not as merchants but as consumers. I think there is considerable evidence—evidence

which encourages me greatly in the view which we are putting forward—that the consumers are beginning to take a hand in this, and I suggest that the leader of the opposition was very wise in making the suggestion he did.

Like him, I was interested to hear what the hon. member for York South (Mr. Noseworthy) had to say. I wish to make one comment particularly on only one line of his thought. He used quite strong words in suggesting that we might still stop, look and listen. These are not his words but mine: that we might still have time to take another look at this measure. Certainly I agree with him there, and I wish to make a few comments along that line. I echo just briefly what the leader of the opposition said. What is the urgency? Is it a matter of life or death? Well, the only suggestion of life or death is from many people who think it may be a matter of life or death for them if this is passed. But I have not heard a suggestion from any quarter that it would be a matter of life or death if it should wait for a few weeks. No one has suggested that. I do not think the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) will suggest it, and the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) certainly did not suggest it.

Therefore it seems to me we have no real reason except—well, what shall I say—the unregenerate political pride of the government. We have no reason except the prestige, fancied or otherwise, of the government; and of course that is a treasure which they must guard for themselves, and the nature of which the rest of us must leave to them to determine. But I just make the point again, that there is no urgency shown or suggested. I believe I am correct when I say that. If I am wrong, then I am ready to be shown that I am wrong; but I have no recollection of it.

I wish now to come to a few points which have been borne in on my mind, now that I have had a better opportunity to read the evidence. I believe it was the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Browne) who the other evening raised the question as to how many at that time had read the evidence. I have taken all the time I could, consisting of a fair number of hours, but certainly I would not suggest I have mastered it yet. However, there are two or three things I wish to bring to the attention of the house, because they seem to deal with matters which are very relevant to what we are considering now. First of all there is the question which has been raised at some length in the house as to the manner in which the committee was conducted, and as to the whole background of its proceedings.