

izing in the general class of products, to see housewives hunting around for bargains, because if they can pick up something a little cheaper than it can be got elsewhere it is good economy. If ever we adopt a system under which nothing can be sold for less than a fixed price, it will mean higher prices.

I know that the Prime Minister made some reference to prices across the line. I am not going to enter into that phase of the subject, other than to say that whether goods in the United States are cheaper or dearer depends on where you buy them. I know that there is competition in that country. I have travelled across the United States eight times in as many years, and it is my personal experience that the same article may be had at different prices in different cities. But everywhere I bought anything I was able to buy it cheaper than it could be had in British Columbia. In Canada, so far as most articles are concerned, competition is non-existent. The price in Halifax is much the same as in Ottawa or in Vancouver, and there is practically no variation even in the interior of British Columbia in spite of the added cost of transportation. That is so whether what you buy is a box of matches or a shirt.

In my opinion it is time we had a quality standard in this country, and I suggest that the matter is well worth study by a committee of this Senate, assisted by the Bureau of Statistics. Many goods which are advertised as wool do not contain more than 40 per cent of wool. So far as I know there is no imposed standard. One suit or one pair of socks may look the same as another, but there can be a vast difference in the quality and in the quantity of wool which the article contains. The time is coming, if it is not already here, when people should be able to buy according to a quality standard. Then, if an article were guaranteed, or advertised as containing a certain percentage of wool, the buyer could be sure that it did in fact contain that quantity.

I have a word or two to say about the Combines Investigation Act. I trust that when we reassemble a committee will be set up to consider this legislation, because in my opinion if any statute requires overhauling it is this particular Act. We have had many exposures of the activities of these combines, the latest, perhaps, having to do with bread. Will anyone contend that a \$10,000 fine is an adequate penalty for a group of large bakeries which controls the bread of the people? We need the kind of Combines Investigation Act which will discourage monopolies. I know that some investigation has been made of the practices of bakeries, and manufacturers of glass and matches, but we have barely scratched the surface. To vary the metaphor,

the really big fish have been left alone. Some of the worst offenders are operating as patent holders, and our laws are powerless to control them. I will cite only one or two cases which have been brought to my attention by a professor of the University of British Columbia who has made a study of this matter. He points out that many large concerns hold patents and enjoy a monopoly of them. Nobody can go into certain businesses without the use of one of those patents. It is well known, for example, that no outsider can obtain a match-making machine. That means that he cannot make matches, because the patent rights of the machinery are held by a combine or cartel. That is but one instance out of many. This professor says that the Du Pont Company and the Rohm and Haas Company of the United States, and I. G. Farben of Germany and a company in Great Britain, had a cartel agreement under which the American monopoly in a dental plastic—one of a group of products—was assigned to the American companies. The same product was sold at two prices: 85 cents per pound for industrial purposes, such as ash-trays, and \$45 per pound for dental plastics. When it was discovered that the powders were being "bootlegged" to the dental laboratories the chemists of the Rohm and Haas Company were given instructions to stop it. They put forward the suggestion that if "a millionth of one percent of arsenic of lead" were put in the commercial product, and it was used by the dental laboratories, the latter could be sued under the Pure Food and Drug Law.

I will mention only one other instance, and this, again, relates to the General Electric Company. They were accused of forcing all manufacturers of bulbs for flash-light lamps to reduce the life of the bulbs from 300 to 200 hours. They hold a patent on these products.

I trust that our investigation next year will be a one hundred per cent affair, and that we shall find out how many patents are held by large companies, especially those with headquarters in Europe or in Great Britain, who will not permit the purchase or sale of articles they control excepting through particular firms or organizations working under restrictive conditions. I believe the Senate could do some really useful work with regard to combines.

I have just a word or two to say about free enterprise. We should bear in mind that the conception of free enterprise held in Europe, including Great Britain, is not the same as ours. I have made reference to this matter on previous occasions, both here and in the other place, and I think that one or two recent occurrences in our own province are worth mentioning as a