

Mr. DORION (Translation): In patent medicines.

An hon. MEMBER (Translation): In jam.

Mr. DENIS (Translation): —even in jam, construction material, etc. I could enumerate many other trusts where this happens, and which are to blame for the existence of this crisis which will continue as long as we lack an energetic government, which lives up to its obligations towards the people. My friends opposite smile.

Mr. GAGNON (Translation): We find it sad.

Mr. DORION (Translation): We not only smile, but laugh.

Mr. DENIS (Translation): Let them laugh because when the people present themselves at the polls and when their seat in the house is in jeopardy, they will not find it so funny.

Mr. MERCIER (St. Henri) (Translation): It is a real cyclone which is approaching.

Mr. DENIS (Translation): And, were I to be personal—

Mr. DORION (Translation): Do not cause us any sorrow.

Mr. DENIS (Translation): —I might point to some that are opposite to me, who will be the first to be left at home at the next election.

Mr. LAFLECHE (Translation): For all the enjoyment we derive from listening to your utterances in the house, we might as well be at home.

Mr. DENIS (Translation): I hear the voice of the hon. member for Richmond-Wolfe (Mr. Lafleche), probably, he will be the first to disappear.

Mr. LAFLECHE (Translation): I would rather disappear at once, than further listen to you.

Mr. DENIS (Translation): You were very uneasy, the other day, while listening to your friend the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Gobeil)—

Mr. LAFLECHE (Translation): I was not in the house.

Mr. DENIS (Translation): —when he insulted what we hold very dear in the province of Quebec: the University of Montreal. I trust that you will be as patient as you were when listening to him, for I do not cast any aspersion on our national institutions.

Mr. DORION (Translation): Which ones.

Mr. DENIS (Translation): I request the government to seriously consider this resolution and act immediately so as to find rational means to control these trusts and all profiteers. In acting thus, it will render a great service to the community.

Hon. W. A. GORDON (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, before the debate on this resolution closes I should like to make a few observations. I have had great difficulty in following the remarks of the hon. members who have spoken, but without transgressing that very sound rule with regard to the discussion of matters which are sub judice, I think it desirable that the position of the government should be made clear.

I gathered from the remarks of the hon. members that they have unconsciously placed the blame, if one wants to call it that, on the government for such action as was or was not taken with respect to the institution of a coal investigation under the terms of the Combines Investigation Act. I should like to make a few observations with respect to the procedure followed, and I think I shall be able to convince hon. members that the government adopted the course which was contemplated by the statute.

Under the act, any six British subjects resident in Canada may sign an application, accompanied by a statutory declaration, that in their opinion a combine as interpreted by the act exists. This application comes before the registrar appointed under the act and it is incumbent upon him to take such steps as he deems necessary to investigate the position set out in the application. It will be noted that the six persons who sign this application do not need to set out the reasons for their belief; any six persons can start the law in motion. The act has a further provision in section 12, which reads:

Whenever such application shall be made to the registrar, or whenever the registrar shall have reason to believe that a combine exists or is being formed, or whenever so directed by the minister, the registrar shall cause an inquiry to be made into all such matters—

And so forth. Now, with respect to the coal inquiry, the matter was discussed in another place and certain statements were made which were brought to my attention as Minister of Labour charged with the responsibility of administering the Combines Investigation Act. Those charges were made by men of prominence, and without any delay, without awaiting the signatures of six persons, I directed that the inquiry take place; and it took place just as rapidly as an inquiry could be carried on.