

Hon. members opposite have insisted upon the committee's recommending rather than reporting to the house. I do not see any difference; there may be a difference, but it is without distinction. I ask any hon. member of this house, if this committee were given the power to recommend, would they renounce their rights to discuss such a recommendation? If not, why do they insist upon it? If they insist upon it, it is only for a dilatory reason. That is one admission I want from them.

The opposition side has emphasized that the government should use the existing agencies, the Combines Investigation Act and the war-time prices and trade board, and in support of their argument they cited the speech made by the present Prime Minister in 1934, when he was leader of the opposition, in connection with the inquiry then proposed. I am not exactly sure of the facts, but I can take a chance and submit this to the house—I am frank in saying this, though it causes an hon. member to cough—the Conservative government abolished the Combines Investigation Act. I am speaking from memory because you can all see that I have not a note before me.

Mr. HANSELL: Well, well.

Mr. HARTT: "Well, well," is most appropriate from a gentleman of the cloth of the boogie-woogie school. It tunes in nicely.

Mr. FRASER: When was it abolished?

Mr. HARTT: By the Conservative government, I believe.

Mr. MARTIN: They repealed it in 1910.

Mr. FRASER: That is entirely wrong.

Mr. CASSELMAN: Who was in power in 1910?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: In 1919 a board of commerce was substituted for it.

Mr. HARTT: I am not surprised that hon. gentlemen opposite quote Barnum and Bailey; but they do not need to quote them; all they need to do is to bring in the public; the circus is right here. There is no foundation for my hon. friends' laughter. The Prime Minister has made the statement that the Combines Investigation Act was repealed and a board of commerce substituted therefor.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: In 1919.

Mr. FULTON: Ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare when it was repealed.

Mr. MARTIN: I said 1910, but I meant to say that the Conservative government had repealed the Combines Investigation Act of 1910 and had substituted for it two other

pieces of legislation, the Board of Commerce Act and a so-called Combines and Fair Prices Act in 1919.

Mr. FRASER: It was an improvement.

Mr. JACKMAN: Did you write the rest of it?

Mr. HARTT: Talking about improvements, a man was found crying one day and, when asked why, he said that his wife had died. They asked him how she died and he said that she died of improvements. The doctor was telling him every day that his wife was improving until finally he found her dead. If the Conservative party goes on improving it will strangle Canada.

Mr. JACKMAN: The Conservative party by your analogy must be Canada.

Mr. HARTT: My hon. friend has not forgotten the last trip he took with me. The Conservative party, a party with a history—I do not say what kind of history—and with a tradition, or what is left of it, repudiated the Combines Investigation Act, but today they say that we should proceed in this crisis under the Combines Investigation Act, which they had some years ago declared as inadequate and no good.

Much ado has been made of a speech the present Prime Minister made in 1934 when he said that the proper course was to proceed by way of the Combines Investigation Act, and there was a lot of laughter from the other side of the house when that speech was quoted. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister was right when he made that speech in 1934 and was right when he introduced this motion, and I will tell you why. Was my hon. friend talking to himself?

Mr. FULTON: I said he is on both sides of the fence as usual.

Mr. HARTT: To judge from the hon. gentleman's hair, he should be a good Liberal.

The price spreads committee of 1934 was instigated by the Hon. H. H. Stevens, a gentleman very fond of sensation.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. HARTT: Oh, we remember 1925 and 1926 when Mr. Stevens, later minister of trade and commerce in the Bennett cabinet, one who shared ministerial responsibility and was supposed to speak for the government of Canada, made certain charges on the floor of this house against the then minister of customs, Mr. Boivin, in regard to prices which caused a split between him and Mr. Bennett, with the result that the destruction party,—or was it the reconstruction party?—was formed.