

nature of the alleged combine and the names of the persons believed to be concerned therein and privy thereto; (c) the manner in which, and where possible the extent to which, the alleged combine is believed to operate or to be about to operate to the detriment of or against the interest of the public whether consumers, producers or others.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: That is an affidavit of belief.

Mr. MCGREGOR: Then the registrar proceeded, on the application of the six persons, or whenever he had reason to believe that a combine existed or was being formed, or whenever directed by the Minister. The provision that the registrar shall proceed whenever he has reason to believe that a combine exists or is being formed does not appear in the amendments as proposed here. A change made in the House of Commons provided that the Commissioner should proceed only when an application is received from six persons or upon direction by the Minister.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: That was 1923.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: After you got the evidence from the six men, and the Minister told you to proceed, what did you do?

Mr. MCGREGOR: I proceeded in an informal way to consult the members of the alleged combines. First of all perhaps we would collect what information we could in the Department from our records and find out what questions to ask those alleged to be parties to the combines. Then we approached them in quite an informal way to size up the situation and see if there was justification for going further.

Hon. Mr. MORAUD: Could you not go into their premises and take all documents?

Mr. MCGREGOR: We could, but that is not the method we have used in any of our preliminary inquiries. It was always an approach to a particular man in his office to get a sizing up of the situation.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: You are consulting them now. As a result of the consultation you have held you are satisfied the allegation is serious. What is your next move?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: You did not put them under oath?

Mr. MCGREGOR: In some instances we did.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: On your first approach?

Mr. MCGREGOR: No. It is really an informal inquiry to satisfy the mind of the registrar, as he then was, that there was something which would justify further proceedings. Then in the period from 1923 to 1930 the registrar reported back to the Minister that in his opinion there was justification for the further inquiry.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: That is the end of the preliminary inquiry. Do you call that a stage?

Mr. MCGREGOR: There was no direct line of demarcation between the preliminary and the fuller inquiry.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: We are looking to see where this judicial authority might come in advantageously.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: Wait a moment, please, Mr. McGreggor, you have gone so far. Then suppose the evidence convinces you there is justification for further inquiry, what do you do?

Mr. MCGREGOR: In the period from 1923 to 1930 recommendation was made to the Minister if in the opinion of the registrar there was occasion to go further. Out of perhaps 450 cases we have dealt with in the last dozen years, I think we have perhaps gone forward with more important inquiries in from twenty to twenty-five cases at the most.