

reasonably." Hon. gentlemen have talked as though these combinations were not bad things. I do not propose to say much about them, except this, that the effect of combinations is to raise the prices of food and clothing and other necessities of life. There is nothing more hurtful to a country than that. And the House of Commons have felt the duty imposed upon them of trying to stop that process. It is our duty, having seen that the sober second thought of the country is behind the House of Commons, to let them have their way in this particular instance.

HON. MR. LOUGHEED—I would not trouble this House at this late period of the evening were it not that as a member of that committee, I am bound to vindicate the committee as against certain inuendoes made by hon. gentlemen who have moved for the recommitment of this report to the committee. The reflection has been cast upon that committee that they knowingly brought into this House a report for the purpose of wilfully rendering ineffectual and inoperative a law upon our Statute-book which we, using the language of the hon. gentleman from Halifax, "knew to be entirely nugatory," and rendering the law inoperative for the purpose for which it was passed. Therefore, in consideration of that fact, I would trouble the House as to the manner in which I viewed this question when before the committee. As far as I can apprehend the duty of that committee, there was only one duty cast upon them, and that was to consider the bearing of these two particular words upon the law as we found it on the Statute-book. We were not delegated to go any further. There was a Bill before us for our consideration to expunge two words that we found on the Statute-book, and the question resolved itself simply into this, whether those words prevented that statute from being operative or not. The two words in question are "unduly" and "unreasonably." My hon. friend from Monck has already stated to this House in the course of this debate that he is quite satisfied that the word "unduly" in no way affects the operation of the Act, because it is entirely harmless, so that we limit the difficulty down to the word "unreasonably." Now, the committee during the consideration of this Bill extended a great deal of liberality to the various gentlemen

who approached them in the capacity of delegates to urge their views upon this question. They treated them, I say, with a delicate consideration and allowed them very much greater latitude than perhaps they were entitled to, but owing to the fact that considerable sensitiveness appeared to prevail in the minds of the promoters of the Bill, the committee therefore appeared to extend to them a latitude which was not warranted if we had limited our deliberation to the strict letter of the proper construction of the Bill before us. It was not our duty to go into the question of combines. It was not our duty to consider the merits or demerits of the alleged iniquitous combinations which were said to exist throughout the length and breadth of this country. Parliament has already expressed its disapprobation of all combinations entered into in restraint of trade, by placing on the Statute-book a law which I submit is calculated to suppress in every way such combinations as the statute was intended to reach. Hon. gentlemen said before that committee that that statute was rendered inoperative by the insertion of the words referred to. One would naturally suppose that before we would be called upon to expunge two words from a statute, or make any material alterations in the statute affecting such very large and such important interests as those before the committee, that a very clear case should be made out to the committee why the proposed action should be taken. The first duty of the committee, I take it to be, was to ascertain if there was a sufficiently clear case made out why there should be any interposition of Parliament this Session for the purpose of changing that Act. What was submitted to the committee on that occasion? Was there any statement made to the committee that this particular statute had come before any court for judicial interpretation? Was there any evidence before the committee that any legal opinion of consequence had been submitted, either to the delegates or to those who were promoting the Bill, that this Act was inoperative by these two words? I say there was no such evidence before the committee that these two words rendered the Act ineffective to carry out the intentions of Parliament against combines formed in restraint of trade. When the promoter of the Bill