

*Combines Investigation Act*

**Mr. Sinnott:** On a question of privilege, I should like to ask the hon. member who is speaking a fair question—

**An hon. Member:** That is not a question of privilege.

**An hon. Member:** Sit down.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Sinnott:** Mr. Speaker—

**An hon. Member:** Sit down.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I do not think there is any question of privilege.

**Mr. Sinnott:** He is afraid he cannot answer the question.

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** Let us consider for a moment—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I would ask hon. members on both sides of the house to observe decorum in the house.

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** Mr. Speaker, I take it you have good intentions. I would ask hon. members to consider for a moment what is meant by unfettered competition, unbridled competition, no restraint upon business at all, the law of supply and demand working to its utmost capacity. What does it mean? It means that all the rich men go into the market and collar everything. Despite what the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) may say, they corner the wheat, they corner the butter, they corner the eggs and sell them for as high a price as they can get. That is what is meant by unfettered competition. That is what is meant by the law of supply and demand being allowed to work. The government has to step in to protect the wheat grower. It has to protect the butter producer, the egg producer, the fish producer. Everybody in the community is protected against the working of the law of supply and demand.

In connection with resale price maintenance, how does it work? Take the manufacturer. He has his capital investment upon which he has to pay a dividend if he is to remain in business. Above all he has to pay his workmen. How does he pay his workmen? Generally they are unionized, and he has to pay a fixed price sometimes set by collective bargaining or through some agency of the government. Nevertheless it has been the practice for many years now for manufacturers to pay the wages demanded of them, and that is done by fixation of some kind. Is it so absurd that manufacturers, who have to pay a fixed price for a part of the cost of the products they produce, should make an agreement with retailers as to what the

ultimate product shall be sold for? It is only reasonable that the manufacturer should be able to sell at a fixed price, and it is not unreasonable that he should talk with the retailer about what a reasonable profit would be.

Getting back to that unfettered competition that is so approved of, we are all familiar, although perhaps not so familiar as we might be, with the beginning of the industrial revolution in England when machinery was first invented. The leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) referred to what occurred in the days so highly approved of by Adam Smith when men, women and children were crowded into ugly tenements close to the factories and children of the smallest size were put to work at the machines. That was unfettered competition. We have got a long way from that. Does the hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Stuart) want us to go back to that sort of thing? That is what unfettered competition means if he wants to go back to it, the law of supply and demand.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) and the Minister of Agriculture are continuously being haggled in the house about what they are doing for the wheat growers or farmers in various lines. Suppose some of the big packing houses of Canada were allowed to store huge quantities of produce and sell them at any prices they felt like. There have been complaints that that has happened. Suppose they bought eggs at 20 cents a dozen and sold them for 65 cents. Suppose they bought butter for 30 or 40 cents a pound and sold it for 60 cents a pound. Would there not be complaints from my hon. friends to the left who represent farming communities? Surely there would, and the same thing applies to any industry. We have to have regulation of business, it is true.

**An hon. Member:** Ask the hon. member for Springfield (Mr. Sinnott).

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** All sorts of labour laws, laws regulating workmen and laws regulating the sale of produce have been put on the statute books of different countries in the last one hundred and fifty years. Certainly there is no doubt that unfettered competition is dead, but in this particular case it will be revived if the bill goes through. Therefore I suggest to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) that he should give consideration to the subamendment that has been brought before the house.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member has exhausted his time.

**Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon):** Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the atmosphere of growing warmth towards participants in this