

*Combines Investigation Act*

extended until the end of 1964 was an appropriate one. The remarks made by the hon. member for Skeena are still not justified, in my opinion, because I have not changed my position with regard to the main objection. I agreed with the minister on one point with regard to which I thought his suggestion was most constructive.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Before the question is put I should like to say another word. If in fact, there were any such collective agreements, or any immediate prospect of such collective agreements being made in any other parts of Canada, I would be very reluctant to go along with this limited and restrictive amendment. I am sure that in the end this parliament will exempt all collective agreements of this character from the operations of the act. I am sure, too, that it was intended from the beginning to exempt them.

I must say, however, I was impressed by what the Minister of Justice has said about the desirability in all the circumstances of allowing this matter to be determined. Because if the permanent legislation does in fact exempt them, the amendment would be quite redundant. We are perhaps in some ways—this may be only a technicality—prejudging litigants engaged in litigation. Therefore, since the minister, in a fashion which may be a change for the better since he changed his portfolio, has shown himself rather more conciliatory than he usually is and has agreed to the substance of the suggestion made by my hon. friend for Vancouver Centre, I would feel very much disposed to go along with the suggestion of the government in this matter and not insist upon what I think in principle would have been the proper course to take. I hope the minister can say to us that, if there is any difficulty about this, the government, if it survives that long, will seek to deal with the problem, and deal with it very promptly, because it would not be desirable to have another crisis such as the last one. I think the minister ought to assure us, because we have had some rather extraordinary examples of cabinet solidarity in these last few months, that this measure has the support of all his colleagues, including in particular the Minister without Portfolio, who is known to take a very personal interest in the Combines Investigation Act.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, I am in the position where I have pretty well had to judge this matter from what I have heard this afternoon. I have not been a member for the past four years, and therefore some of these matters have not been brought to my attention. Therefore as the debate has taken place, I have listened with a great deal of interest

and tried to assess the picture on both sides. I must be frank and say that I am in agreement with the principle of this amendment and that the fishermen should not be in the position where from year to year they are faced with this uncertainty and this problem. However, on the other hand, I have listened to the arguments which have been put forward on the other side. Reference has been made to the litigation that is now in progress. I think some reference has been made to the redrafting of fisheries legislation. Another matter was also interpolated, and that was the question of its possible effect upon other segments of our economy.

Mr. Chairman, as I say, I believe that the principle here is right, but in view of these other situations which have developed and these other arguments which have been made, I am inclined to think that we should allow this measure to go through, as suggested in the amendment to the bill, so that the whole picture can be clarified. Then after the picture has been entirely clarified, we can go ahead and attend to the other matters which may arise therefrom. So as I say, although I agree with the principle here, I also think that we ought to allow the picture to be entirely clarified, these other things cleared out of the way, and then we can declare our position from there on.

**The Chairman:** Is the committee ready for the question?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Before the question is put, can the minister give the assurance for which I asked, because I think it would make many people in the fishing ridings happy?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglington):** There were a couple of points raised by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate. May I say in reply to the first one, by way of emphasizing what I said earlier, that I am advised by the director of investigation and research that what is involved here is not an ordinary collective agreement at all. On the second point, I can assure the hon. member that nothing would give the government in this situation, and myself in particular, a greater sense of relief than to see this matter come to an early conclusion. The hon. member will appreciate that the government has no control over the proceedings before the restrictive trade practices commission; but as to any such proceedings as the government has control over, I can assure the hon. member and this committee that the early conclusion of these proceedings would make us very happy.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I do not think that is quite what I meant. I may not have phrased my