

for the official opposition. I am not. I am the plain senator from Ponteix, speaking in my own name, and what I say will be an expression of nothing but my own views. I freely admit and I do so in clear conscience, that I support the bill, because I believe in freedom of trade and freedom of action by individuals. I do not like government control over anything, unless it be unavoidable. The leader has suggested that the measure before us is a temporary one, which will have to be judged by its results and which may, as time goes on, be amended as deemed necessary. In these circumstances I am in favour of the bill.

I do, however, wish to raise a side issue. As you know, I have always been opposed to the establishment of a joint committee of members of both houses for the consideration of a controversial matter. I have never liked that procedure, and I do not suppose that I am going to change my opinion on this before I die. This Senate, this body of which we are so proud, was created for what purpose? Chiefly to consider and, as deemed wise in the particular circumstances, to amend or reject or approve what has been done by the other house. At least, that is my way of interpreting the function of the Senate. That is why, although I did not say so at the time, I was opposed to the appointment at this session on the Joint Committee on Combines Legislation. In the last two days I have read the committee's report and proceedings, and I was glad to find that the senators appointed to the committee were good representatives of this house and did their work well. There is sitting opposite me at the moment an honourable gentleman who took a very important part in the committee's work (Hon. Mr. Lambert). But the committee was composed of 24 members of the House of Commons and only 12 senators. Why was there this disparity between the two houses? If we are to have a joint committee, why is each house not equally represented on it? That is what I should like to know. I say that senators should not submit to being a minority on a joint committee.

Furthermore, in reading over the committee's proceedings, I find that senators were sometimes not treated as they should have been. I observed that in one instance my honourable friend from Huron-Perth (Hon. Mr. Golding) made a statement to the committee chairman, and no attention at all was paid to it. In fact, the senator apparently was treated much as if he had been a school boy interfering in the committee's work. If the Senate is to continue to participate in joint committees, the members of this house

should at least be treated as senators and not as messenger boys for the House of Commons.

I have no mandate to speak for this side of the house on the question now before us. I was requested by my leader to be here on December 27th. I was here on that date, and again on the 28th, and I am now here on the 29th, attending the house with the regularity that I have practiced for twenty years.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Marcotte: Upon accepting the honour of appointment as a senator, I was commanded to be here, "all difficulties and excuses whatsoever laying aside", and since then I have attended every day that I was physically able to be here. I am not the only one who takes his responsibilities to the Senate seriously, and I congratulate the honourable senators in attendance today. I recall that once when I was on a train I received a telegram to return to Ottawa in order that the house might have a quorum. Fortunately, there is no such problem today.

I was not able to follow the explanation which the leader of the government gave of the legislation before us, for I am not an economist and I do not possess the commercial knowledge necessary to grasp the intricacies of the subject. I have, however, read the evidence taken, and I hold certain views as to how a problem of this nature should be handled. It is my opinion that the Senate, which is a non-political body, is the best place in which to give consideration to such a contentious matter. The subject now before us could well receive the same full consideration in one of our committees as was given to the Railway Act and the Income Tax Act. If the legislation before the house does not work out, I suggest that next time such a measure should be considered dispassionately by a committee of this house; in that way the Senate would be performing in regard to legislation the functions for which it was created, namely, to revise, to amend, to reject, and if workable, to approve.

Hon. L. M. Gouin: Honourable senators, I shall try to be as brief as possible. However, I believe that even those who differ most strongly with my views on the question before us will agree that I have the right to express freely my opinion and to discuss the principle of this very important measure.

The leader on this side, in his interesting and eloquent remarks, spoke of the question of legalizing price maintenance. I wish to put very clearly before the house the fact that the present question is the outlawing of price maintenance, which in itself is perfectly legal at the present time, and is