

ment, his duties and so forth. You see that he is to report to the minister. Canada will never get anywhere in attacking combines as long as this administration is in the hands of a political department, because that is all the Department of Labour is to-day. It is not a judicial department; the commissioner is not independent. He has to report to a political minister, and we heard something about what this particular minister said last night at Pembroke. Certain similar legislation which was passed by the late government, and which is to some extent copied in this section, he termed counterfeit legislation. What kind of judicial body is this going to be, when a responsible minister of the crown makes such remarks as that? What investigating powers will the commissioner have? I have nothing but the utmost regard for Mr. McGregor, but what can he do?

Why do we not attack this problem as it has been attacked in the United States, which provided the model for some parts of this act? The government have tried to revamp this section in accordance with the recent decisions of the privy council. I can tell you that this section was before the senate last year; there was a little difference of opinion, and they reported it back with amendments. The Prime Minister did not see fit to accept those amendments, and as a result nothing was done, though I thought the two houses might have got together with regard to this administration by the commissioner, and his powers. For the last twelve months they have fallen back on the old legislation, the Inquiries Act, under which three or four investigations have been held. What has been the result? In the coal case Mr. McGregor reported a whitewash. Then they had a commission conducted by Mr. Tory—Tory in name only, so far as I know—who never mentioned the consumers in his report. During the recess of parliament he was supposed to investigate the cause of the increase in the price of coal from \$5.50 in 1905 to \$14 or \$15 to-day. What can the proposed commissioner, Mr. McGregor, do? I have laid complaints before this very gentleman and before his predecessor, when Mr. Murdock was the minister. I complained about the combines in respect of coal, milk, bread and other things, and what was done? They sent a man to Toronto and some sort of investigation was held. I went to see the judge presiding at the York county assizes when there was a scarcity of milk and the health officer was complaining about the way infants were dying off. The judge consulted with the crown officer representing the province, and then said that in view of this act, which we are now

amending, he believed the whole question of administration had been taken out of the old law under the criminal code.

I have very little faith in this bill. I was head of the municipality of Toronto for some years, and I had a good deal to do with such administration as is proposed under this measure. I have no faith left in it. The other day the Minister of Justice was complaining about communism. Communism would not exist in this country if we broke up these combines. I can tell the Minister of Labour now that the money spent by the late government in connection with the price spreads inquiry was money spent to the very best advantage in the interests of this country. It showed the rotten state of affairs in Canada and the things these big interests have done. These interests were summoned before the commissioner and they refused to give evidence. They read all the cases, and they argued for days about the conflict of power and jurisdiction as between the federal and provincial governments. We will never get anywhere so long as we have this multiplicity of commissioners and commissions trying to attack a problem they do not know anything about. I can tell you this, that these combines will affect confederation if they go much farther.

I have referred to some dealings I have had with the Department of Labour regarding combines and with the commissioner. It is now proposed to appoint a commissioner in place of proceedings under the criminal code before a judge presiding at an assize court who could deal with offences against the criminal code. We know that Judge Landis fined the Standard Oil Company \$50,000,000, and was going to put some of them in gaol. I only wish the commissioner or the Minister of Labour would bring to the bar of the house some of these people who have been treating our statutes as scraps of paper.

In my opinion, after a careful study of the act of 1935, I believe that with the exception of a few words here and there it is almost perfect. Further, in my opinion the social legislation introduced in that year will in years to come redound to the credit of the present leader of the opposition. He and his minister of labour, Mr. Gordon, were the first people to attack the problem in a sensible way.

I should have liked to say more, but will not detain the committee. I predict the law courts will upset the act and that its administration will be a glorious fiasco and trusts and combines will still flourish like the green bay tree. The price spreads commission showed them up. There has not been a word said since. The Minister of Labour is com-