

Combines Investigation Act

they are thinking. I hope also that as many of the real consumers as possible, not just those who describe themselves as such, will seek out the members and explain to them at some length just what they really think of legislation of this type.

Then of course the members will come back with better information. Perhaps they might even come back—and I hope they may do so—with the suggestion that this legislation stand over until the next regular session of parliament. That brings me back to the suggestion that, since it is apparent that this debate is not going to end quickly, it might be well to let this bill stand at this point, to proceed with other measures that are before the house, to dispose of any that can be disposed of, and then to consider carefully whether this measure should be returned at all. I hope the decision might be in accordance with the recommendation I have made, namely that this measure would not be returned at this time but that steps would be taken to have adequate inquiry, and that the measure would be dealt with carefully and in the best possible way when the next session meets.

The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) is in his place. I can only express to him again my hope that, whether or not we are in disagreement on this matter, he will recognize the fact that we feel strongly on this subject and that we are simply expressing the conviction that this is most dangerous legislation when we present our arguments which, I might say, as they apply to other aspects of this problem, will be continued as this measure is under discussion. I feel that if it were possible to let this measure stand so hon. members might obtain more information from their personal contacts, we might perhaps be able to deal more expeditiously with some of the other measures that still remain on the order paper.

Mr. Low: Mr. Speaker, if I may be allowed to do so I should like to get some information from the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) on one point. Even if the fair trade commission he suggests were set up, does he not think it would also be necessary to abolish the vertical type of price maintenance we now have, in order to make it possible for this commission to function?

Mr. Drew: I should like to answer that question, Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted to do so. Perhaps I was not sufficiently clear on that point. In introducing the subamendment and simply stating that we were asking that consideration be given to the setting up of a fair trade commission, we recognize the fact that there must be a much broader examination of this subject than has yet taken

place. We recognize the fact that there are practices which should be under restraint. We recognize the fact—as it has been recognized in earlier attempts which have been made in this house to pass legislation—that there are practices which should be stopped. But it is also recognized that there are trade practices along those lines that are in the interests of the public. What I said was that I did not think at this stage we should seek to draft the bill, but rather that we should assert as a principle that we want this measure held back so there might be further inquiry, and so the advisability of having a fair trade commission, under which the most desirable type of trade practice could be set up, should be carefully examined by the government and by parliament.

Mr. Noseworthy: May I ask the hon. member a question, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With the consent of the hon. member.

Mr. Noseworthy: Under the commission the hon. member suggests or visualizes in his party's amendment, would the manufacturer or a commission appointed by the government have the final say in what the price should be? That is the point, I think. If I understand the leader of the opposition correctly, he is advocating some form of commission under which the manufacturer will still be free to set his price. We were suggesting a body responsible to this parliament where that price would be determined and regulated.

Mr. Drew: Yes, Mr. Speaker; that is what I understood. I for one certainly do not support the idea that those who are not themselves in a particular business are better able to decide what a business can do than are those engaged in it. I believe that a commission can be set up which will supervise practices of this kind. Without in any way seeking to evade the question, may I point out, as I did in the answer I just gave to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low), that we are not putting forward a bill, and that we are not attempting to cross the "t's" and to dot the "i's".

Mr. Noseworthy: You never do.

An hon. Member: Neither does the C.C.F.

Mr. Drew: Let me answer that comment by saying that we do, to this extent. The Conservative party, not the C.C.F., has had the responsibility of government in this country for about half the time since confederation, and they were definite enough about it to pass, in 1935, a bill which the courts unfortunately held to be ultra vires. The general purpose that was intended, with