

Congress of the United States, committees have been formed to investigate this subject during the present Session. Now, I do not deny, Sir, that combines may exist without protection; in the case of anthracite coal, for instance, to which the hon. gentleman referred, a combination does exist in the United States, although the anthracite coal is not protected in that country. The reason for that is this: There is not a tariff protection, there is not an artificial protection, there is not a statutory protection on anthracite coal, but there is a protection by nature, because the United States is the only country in the world that produces that particular kind of coal, and therefore all they have to do in the case of this natural production is to make a combination. It might be just the same in Canada, in case maple sugar was not produced in the Northern States. We could form, without any protection on maple sugar, a combination here among the people who would buy it up or produce it, and no artificial tariff protection would be necessary to make a combination in a case of that kind. The case of anthracite coal being the subject of a combination is, I dare say, a very bad one, and one that should be looked into and put a stop to if we can do so. The article of anthracite coal being a subject of combination in Canada as well as the United States, arises from the fact that it is not produced anywhere else than in the United States, and it is the American combination that creates a subordinate combination—a small donkey engine to work out their larger scheme in Canada. It has nothing to do with the tariff either one way or the other. I quite agree with the hon. member that there are combines, or combinations or organisations, that are perfectly lawful and perfectly legitimate. The combinations among workmen to maintain their own rights, the rights of labor, are, in my judgment, at all events, perfectly right and perfectly legitimate, so long as they keep within the bounds of the law. Then, trade associations are continually making combinations of a very proper character to assist one another in their mutual interests. But when combinations are accompanied by monopolies, there, I think, is the distinction and there is where we ought to interfere, whatever the remedy may be. My impression is that in regard to all those combinations in Canada which occur in articles which are protected by a high tariff, the simple and only radical remedy is to remove those duties and let in foreign competition, and that will kill the combination at once. Other combinations that are not protected by the high tariff may require special legislation, and I dare say this committee will discover it. Public opinion has been aroused very strongly in the United States on this subject. In Congress a committee was appointed this very Session, very much of the same character as the committee proposed, to enquire into and report upon the action of trusts and combines. Perhaps trusts and combines are more dangerous to the community in the United States than they have yet become here; at all events they have had more influence upon the public men and the politicians there than they appear to have had here. I did hope to hear my hon. friend say that, if it were the fact, that the protective tariff renders those combines possible, he would go against the tariff. I hope yet to hear some hon. gentleman opposite make this statement, although my hon. friend has not done so. I will take the liberty of showing the House how some republican protectionists in the Congress of the United States, in the House of Representatives at all events, have taken ground above party on this question, and while they affirm themselves to be adherents of a policy of protection, they say that if it has had the effect, which is attributed to it by the public in the United States to-day, of fostering those combines, they will go for a reduction of duties. Mr. Mason, of Chicago, is an active republican protectionist. He introduced the first resolution on the subject in Congress in January, and it was referred

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to the Committee on Manufactures, which brought in a recommendation to the House with a more comprehensive resolution of the same character. In the debate that took place on the 26th January upon the latter resolution, Mr. Mason used these words:

"There are some industrious and energetic men in this country who would like to have a corner upon sunshine, and levy a tariff, of a thousand dollars each, on every ray of foreign sunlight."

Then he was asked by Mr. Nelson of Minnesota:

"Have you any doubt in your own mind that the tariff laws indirectly co-operate to aid these trusts?"

Mr. Mason, in reply, said:

"I will say, in response to the gentleman from Minnesota, that I have no doubt there is a class of trusts and a class of men who take advantage of the tariff laws. We, who believe in a higher protective tariff, think there should be some way to avoid taking advantage of the laws and perverting them from their proper purpose. But so far as I am concerned, expressing also, I believe, the sentiments of the people of my district, I presume if there is a proper way of meeting the difficulty this committee can report a proper Bill, but if there is no way to protect the people from these exactions of trusts except the revision of the tariff, so far as I am concerned, I am ready to vote for that now."

I sincerely hope that before the discussion in the country upon this question of combines is finished, we shall find members willing to acknowledge the error, just as Mr. Mason has done as representing his district, which means Chicago, and that they will come forward and say that if it is necessary to remove those duties to prevent combines, they will do so. It is impossible to deny that the feeling in this country against these combines is general, and it is not confined to one set of political thinkers or one class of men. I could quote a very strong article in the *New York Herald of Monday last*, headed: "Trusts worse than Slavery," in which the trusts are attacked in a most vigorous manner. I do not say that the *New York Herald* is an infallible authority, but I do say this, that, like the *London Times*, it tries to go with public opinion, and it may be fairly taken on any great question as representing the public opinion of the day. But we do not require to go to New York to find strong language in the independent press against combines. There is a newspaper published in Montreal, which certainly is not a Liberal paper, it prides itself on being an independent paper, but I have always thought that the *Montreal Star* was more Conservative than Liberal.

Mr. MITCHELL. I beg your pardon.

Mr. EDGAR. I didn't say the *Herald*; I would not venture to quote the language of that organ of public opinion, the *Herald*, when the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell) is here himself. However, I would like to read to the House a short article from the *Montreal Star*, published on the 14th inst., on this subject, and I would commend it to the attention of my hon. friends opposite. It is headed, "The Combines," and is as follows:—

"The question of the suppression of 'the combines' is not merely a question of the whole nation paying a cent or two a pound more for its sugar than it need pay. It is the growth of the 'combine' system that we have to fear. The rapid development of the trade trusts in the United States and the financial success of the trusts in Canada is alarming. Soon every article, the manufacture of which requires the investment of large capital, will be controlled by a trust in the United States, and the spectacle of Canadian commercial corporations earning more than the amount of their whole capital in a single year must prove very tempting to those manufacturers in Canada who have not yet formed 'combines.' The abolition of the protective duties on the articles controlled by the Canadian 'combines,' at the earliest possible day, has become an imperative necessity. The friends of the National Policy must see that this is necessary. The only possible alternative is free trade; and of the two evils, free trade or 'combines' protected at the expense of the nation, we prefer free trade. We believe that under the peculiar conditions which prevail in Canada protection is absolutely necessary to the development of the country—"

So you see this is a protectionist organ.

"—but protection for the benefit of 'combines,' protection to make wealthy monopolists more wealthy, is impossible in a free country.