

Combines Investigation Act

An act to amend the Public Printing and Stationery Act.

An act respecting the Canadian forces.

An act respecting the general synod of the Church of England in Canada.

An act respecting the general synod of the Church of England in Canada and the missionary society of the Church of England in Canada.

An act to incorporate the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren of Canada.

An act to incorporate the Sisters of Charity of the House of Providence.

An act respecting the Toronto harbour commissioners.

An act to amend the Railway Act.

An act respecting construction of works for the generation of electrical power in the international rapids section of the St. Lawrence river.

An act to establish the St. Lawrence seaway authority.

An act to amend the North Fraser Harbour Commissioners Act.

An act to provide for the financial administration of the government of Canada, the audit of the public accounts and the financial control of crown corporations.

An act to amend the Dominion Elections Act, 1938, and to change its title to the Canada Elections Act.

An act respecting the National Gallery of Canada.

An act to amend the Civil Service Act.

An act to provide for short-term credit to grain producers in the prairie provinces to meet temporary financial difficulties arising from inability to complete harvesting operations or to make delivery of grain.

An act to authorize the provision of moneys to meet certain commitments for new equipment incurred by the Canadian National Railways system during the calendar year 1951, and to authorize the guarantee by His Majesty of certain securities to be issued by the Canadian National Railway Company.

An act to amend the Canadian Broadcasting Act, 1936.

An act to provide for the establishment of an agricultural products board.

At one o'clock the house took recess.

The house resumed at two o'clock.

COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT**AMENDMENT TO FORBID THE FIXING OF SPECIFIC OR MINIMUM RESALE PRICES**

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Garson for the second reading of Bill No. 36, to amend the Combines Investigation Act, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Coldwell.

Mr. Noseworthy: Mr. Speaker, when we were called to the other place I was about to show that the bill before us is the culmination of a controversy that exists within the free enterprise system as to how much competition should be permitted within that system. I pointed out that the Liberals on the one hand support free and open competition as provided for in the bill, but the Conservatives favour regulated and controlled competition, that the Liberals are supported by the mass buyers and distributors

of merchandise while the Conservatives are supported by the manufacturers and, I would say, by the independent retailers throughout the country. I think we can draw from that the conclusion that today there is just no place in the merchandising of goods for free and open competition such as the government visualizes. The view is expressed by the pharmaceutical association in their brief when they call attention on page 42 to the factors which in modern times have entered our free economy. They say:

Adam Smith's economics knew nothing of the baffling problems that our machines have created. The early pioneer had only a few rather simple problems to solve; but today's interdependence of men, of classes of men—pounding engines and whirling wheels—corporations, holding companies, and industrial empires have created problems that Adam Smith never dreamed of happening.

Granted then that there just is no place in our present system of merchandising goods for that free and open competition which the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) visualizes in the bill, and accepting the fact that such competition as we have must be regulated and controlled, as admitted by business, by the pharmaceutical association and by those who put forward the Conservative point of view, the question arises as to who shall do that regulating and controlling. After all, the present system of price maintenance, a device which has been practised now for twenty-five years, a system that has been worked out by the manufacturers and retail merchants whereby the manufacturer is able to fix the retail price at which the goods he manufactures shall be sold in every store across the country, appears to be giving satisfaction to the manufacturers. They are quite satisfied with the system.

The retailer finds it much more convenient to have the manufacturer fix the price at which the article shall be sold than to have to go through the difficulty of figuring the individual mark-up on every article he places on his shelves. But there are others besides the manufacturers and the retailers to be considered. In this fight between the two groups of giants within the free enterprise system, the mass purchasers and distributors of goods such as the T. Eaton Company on the one hand and the manufacturers on the other, there are a few million consumers who should be given some consideration. If it is necessary in order to maintain the private enterprise system and prevent the growth of monopolies within the distributive branch of business, then in our opinion the authority to control and regulate price maintenance, or whatever degree of price maintenance is in the public interest, should be in the hands of an authority that is subject to parliament.