

it would mean that the conduct of affairs in this country, legislative and executive, might be delegated to Cabinet Ministers, and that there would be no necessity to call the representatives of the people together to sanction their acts. I hope that the people of Canada are too intelligent to consent to a thing of that sort. Judging from the acts of this Ministry up to the present time, I do not think that the people of this country have been inspired with sufficient confidence to warrant them placing this power under the control of the Government. Sir, the Government ask for a power which should not be placed in the hands of any Government, whether it be Liberal or Conservative. It is too important a question to be decided by other than the representatives of the people in Parliament, and too important to be left to the judgment of the present Cabinet, even in the light of all the wisdom they claim credit for. If the majority of the members of this House place such an extraordinary power under the will and wisdom of the Controller of Customs, I say that it means that our notions of parliamentary government in Canada have gone. It means that the members of this House have been willing to surrender a right which no Parliament should surrender—a surrender so dangerous and so far-reaching in its effects that I am sure the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches will hesitate before asking it from the members of this House, even on their own side. Why, Sir, with such a power in their hands, the Government could make commercial treaties with the United States, with Germany, with Belgium, or with any other country, without calling Parliament? The executive here in Ottawa are to be the judges. At their own sweet will they might bind this country, and do it untold injury. Even if they were prompted with the most honest motives, I say that the wisdom of no set of men is so great as to warrant them in assuming a power of that kind, a power which should not be placed in the hands of any executive in any country having responsible government.

There is another provision of this measure which is equally dangerous. Hon. gentlemen have discovered, since they got to the Treasury benches, a means of curing combines. When they were out of office, they never thought of such a thing. My hon. friend from West York (Mr. Wallace) did perhaps more than any other man in Canada in striking at what is an admitted evil. Nobody pretends to justify combines. There is a complete consensus of opinion in Canada that combines should not exist, and that every effective means should be adopted to prevent them and bring them to an end. Having said that, let us adopt not only a rational means, but an honest means, of dealing with them. My hon. friend from West York put on the Statute-book an Act dealing with them which may be tardy.

Mr. CLANCY.

but which is the only safe method in our enlightened age; and he has pointed out in this House, more than once, that the present Minister of Justice, whose duty it was to enforce the law in the province of Ontario as the Attorney General of that province, turned his back upon it. He was never friendly to Dominion laws while in the Government of Ontario. He has stated on more than one occasion that it was not especially his duty to enforce federal laws. Though he had the constitution of the courts and all the necessary machinery in his hands, he made no effort in that direction. I do not know whether that hon. gentleman has insured the present method of striking at combines. If it were proposed to place in the hands of a Conservative Government such a power, these hon. gentlemen would justly make their protests ring through Canada against such a proposition. Even Liberal papers, though saying that combines should be struck down wherever possible, have raised the warning that this would be a very unsafe power in the hands of a corrupt Government. Well, if anything is dangerous in the hands of a corrupt Government, it should not be placed in the hands of any Government. The belief that a Government will administer an Act properly and honestly is no security to the people. We want the security of the laws. We want a better security than the profession or the outward practices of any Government. In some circumstances you must trust men, but this is not a case where you should be obliged to trust men. This is a case of taking an extraordinary power by means of which hon. gentlemen can hold the hatchet over every honest manufacturer of this country. They could go to a manufacturer and say: "You have combined." The manufacturer might say: "No, there is nothing in that." They might reply: "Never mind, we are on to you, and if you do not support us or put up for us, we will come down on you."

An hon. MEMBER. Oh, they would not do that.

Mr. CLANCY. My hon. friend says they would not do that, but I am sure that the people of Canada would not wish them to have the power to do it. I am afraid that some tolls would have to be paid, and that if they were not paid, a man's business would have to go to the winds. I say the people want better security than that, and I doubt whether even this Parliament will commit itself to so extraordinary a proposition as to place so dangerous a power in the hands of any Government in this country. Hon. gentlemen opposite have not defended that proposition so far. The hon. Minister of Finance might be excused for not referring to it, for he had a long speech to make; but I doubt whether hon. gentlemen opposite are prepared to give up their rights as members of Parliament, and to