

tion, the coal combination—I think the latter has been more or less done away with. They have been exposed to such an extent that they dare not undertake it again, because the people have seen through it. Then we have a biscuit and confectionery combine, a barbed wire combine; a combine in stovemakers, undertakers, oatmeal millers—and I am happy to say that the latter has come to grief. I need not run over the list of other combines, which I do not wish to speak about, and which I am not so well able to prove. The Combines Committee has done a great deal of good. If it has done nothing else it has induced people to look into these matters for themselves. What does the evidence show? It shows that under the coal combination in Toronto, when a contract was to be given to supply the Government buildings or the water works or other large institutions, it was put up to the highest bidder at a certain price. The contract for water works was to be let. They would say to a coal dealer, a member of the combine: “How much will you give us for the contract at that price, and we will see that is the price you get for it, because all the rest of the dealers will tender at a higher price?” One man says: “I will give \$1,500 for that contract,” and he gets it. Then you will ask what do they do with this money? If they, get, say \$10,000 as the result of the combine, they divide it according to a system that they have amongst themselves, reserving one-sixth of the money that is so filched from the people in this manner for expenses.

I will not read the evidence. It is interesting, but it is not so interesting to the people as it is to those who are engaged in combines to take large sums of money from the people in this manner. I happened to be in the committee room two years ago when the evidence was being taken. A gentleman was under examination, and he said: “I belonged to the coal combine. They fined me \$100, and I paid it. Then for some other trivial offence they fined me another \$100, and I left the combine. I began to think it was a little tiresome, and I thought I would go on my own hook. The result was, I cut the combine, and I sent direct to the United States for coal. I had the money to pay for it, but I could not get it, and I found that I had no other way to carry on my business than to join the combine again.”

HON. MR. SMITH—Because he could not order enough coal at a time.

HON. MR. READ—He belonged to the combine, and he was getting 75 cents a ton from the combine for selling their coal, but he asked somebody to buy a ton of coal or put out a sign or some other trifling thing of that kind, and they fined him \$100. I would like to know if that is a state of things that Parliament can suffer to be carried on? I see in this evidence that Gooderham and Worts, very large dealers, by some means or other got a cargo of coal. It came to the ears of the coal combine, and they wrote to the party that shipped the coal that he would be fined for shipping coal to Gooderham & Worts, and they did fine him for so doing. It is a ring within a ring. We cannot prevent our American friends from ringing in that way, but we can prevent it at home. If the only object of this Bill was to punish by fine for entering into these combines they would not mind it one bit: they would simply put the screws on, give one turn more, and take the fine out of the pockets of the people.

But when they have to go behind prison bars then they begin to think. The money punishment they do not care for, so long as they can make it up out of the pockets of the public. I have said enough about the coal combine, and I will leave my hon. friend opposite (Mr. Clemow) to tell what he knows about it. He will perhaps tell the public how many thousand dollars he has put into his pocket through the means of the coal combine. The biscuits and confectionery combine I will say nothing about. The binding twine combine is a matter I do not know much about. All the information we have is that there are four manufacturers of binding twine, and they have a combine. Then take the undertakers. Here is a nice little exposé of their combine, and I quote from the evidence to show how the undertakers of Ontario put up their prices on the people. I will read just a clause or two from the constitution of the association:

“Article 10. Each and every party or parties, who may after this date start business as undertakers within the jurisdiction of this association, may become members by making application to the secretary and paying them the sum of \$25, and shall be approved by at least three out of four of the nearest members of this association in good standing to the applicants proposed place of business, and receive the approval of the Executive Committee.