

which I have alluded, and with which I will not deal at length this afternoon, it will be found that every recommendation that is within our legal competence has been given effect to. I regret if the manner in which that has been done does not commend itself to the judgment of all the members of that commission, but there is no rule that provides that you must enact legislation that pleases every member of a commission. There is no rule that calls upon this parliament to enact legislation in the terms of a recommendation, unless indeed the recommendation is legal. For as sixteen years ago those recommendations were made in good faith and were found to be the basis of invalid and unconstitutional legislation, we trust that in the meantime, with sixteen years of experience with the decisions of the courts, we have avoided the pitfalls that were pointed out by the privy council.

I do submit to this house, in asking for the third reading of this bill, that in this measure we have made an earnest effort—not the last word but an earnest effort—to attain the end in view. If it happens that all these ends are not attained at one fell swoop I am always content to remember that the development of British institutions, of the very institution which we enjoy to-day, as well as of our common law, has been here a little and there a little, precept upon precept, line upon line, until the growth and development of common sense has found expression in legislation reflecting the will and purpose of the people.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the Prime Minister's eloquent defence of the present legislation there are many of us who recognize the hopeless inadequacy of the bill as it comes before us for third reading. We feel, too, that it is far from implementing the report of the price spreads commission. I always enjoy listening to the Prime Minister's speeches, but I have a feeling that as a great advocate he might almost as easily argue on the other side and be equally convincing. He makes use of a great many well rounded phrases and catch words which often becloud rather than clarify the issue before the house. I believe that was the case in the speech to which we have just listened.

I must say that the speaker who preceded the right hon. gentleman, the former Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens) made a speech with much of which I very heartily concur. He gave an indictment of the existing business practices which was not in any sense answered by the Prime Minister. Indeed

the Prime Minister was so busy talking about constitutional questions, difficulties and limitations that he did not really get around to a consideration of the great evils besetting the people of Canada to-day. At least in part these evils have been set forth in the report of the price spreads commission, and I do not intend to take the time to enumerate them. I believe we all realize however that we cannot long endure present conditions.

This and other bills which have been introduced by the government, professing to implement the report of the price spreads commission, do not I submit begin to touch the evils of existing practices. More than that, the ex-Minister of Trade and Commerce has given an indictment of the proposed legislation which I believe maintains its strength, notwithstanding all that the Prime Minister has said. Again I do not wish to review the ground traversed by the ex-minister, but I must say that he has expressed to-day what is in the minds of a great many people in Canada, namely, that notwithstanding these constitutional and financial difficulties we cannot go on as we are for very much longer. He has expressed, too, the disappointment of large numbers of Canadian people in the legislation now before the house.

Further than that, I quite agree with what he said concerning Liberal theories. It seems to me that the Liberal position with regard to these bills has been anything but justifiable on the part of people who are—as they are—making a bid for power within the next few months. We have yet to learn what the Liberal policy is. For months, at this session of parliament, the legislative program of the Conservative party has been under criticism. I believe the Liberal party are quite right in criticizing, but we have not yet been given any alternative policy. It seems to me that position cannot be justified. In this instance the Liberals simply go back to the old theory of free competition, individual liberty, and that kind of thing at a time, as the ex-minister has pointed out, when those phrases simply do not apply and when certainly they will not solve our problem.

I believe I should not have ventured however to say anything at this stage, had not the ex-Minister of Trade and Commerce taken the ground that there had been very little discussion in this house with regard to some of the most important problems with which, in his judgment, we could deal. He spoke about questions of currency, and indicated that we should have considered the stabilization of currency; in fact he indicated that we should have had it five years ago. Well,