

Mr. FISHER. We must not imagine for an instant that the Bill of the hon. member for York (Mr. Wallace) is the Bill of the Committee of last year. That Bill is an evolution of the hon. gentleman's own brain from the evidence adduced before the Committee, as he considered it. The Bill was only brought before the Committee at its last sitting, and it was not accepted by the Committee because the Committee did not think it was at that time in a position to bring in a Bill.

Mr. WALLACE. I was only referring to the report of the Committee which was unanimously adopted.

Mr. FISHER. That is perfectly true, but I do not wish the House to imagine that this was a Bill adopted by the Committee. I concur with the statement of the hon. gentleman that the Committee very thoroughly investigated this question and examined a number of witnesses, and I think the report is exhaustive on the subject of combines. Therefore I do not think it will be necessary to summon witnesses before the Banking and Commerce Committee, but I do think it is necessary that the clauses of the Bill should be examined and that some material changes should be made in it by the Banking and Commerce or some other Committee of this House. It might go into Committee of the Whole, and be threshed out there, but I think it would be better to send it to the Committee on Banking and Commerce and let them thresh it out.

Mr. COCKBURN. As seconder of this motion, I emphatically protest against the suggestion that I did so with the view to burke this Bill. The hon. gentleman has had this Bill before the House for a few weeks, and during that time he has found it necessary to make serious alterations in it. His own ideas were apparently so crude and hastily formed that he has had to propose certain material alterations, and I thought it was necessary that we should give him further time to consider his measure, and therefore I thought it was only right that the Bill should go before its natural committee, the Committee on Banking and Commerce. I think it is the most important commercial Bill which has come before the House this Session. It may arrange or disarrange the whole commerce of the country, and therefore the House will see, and I think even my hon. friend from York (Mr. Wallace) himself will acknowledge the propriety of that motion being adopted, and that it is not intended to burke a Bill which has for its intent so much to benefit the interests of the country.

Mr. SPROULE. I do not think anyone in this House will agree with the hon. gentleman who has just spoken (Mr. Cockburn) or with the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Brown), because, at this late state of Session, it is evident that it will be almost impossible, if not altogether impossible, to have that Bill considered by the Committee and brought back to the House in time to pass it. The First Minister asks us in the first place to suspend the debate which is taking place on one of the most important Bills before the House in reference to these unlawful and unreasonable combinations which have sprung up in this country during the last few years and then it is proposed to send it to a Committee. We must look upon this as a most important measure. If we judge it from the interests which are involved, if we judge it from the manner in which devices have been brought to bear on the legislators of this country in connection with it, if we judge it by the restrictions on trade which it proposes to obviate, restrictions which enhance the price to the consumer and reduce it to the producer, we must see how important it is. Why, therefore, should we attempt to burke it by this device at this time, or why should an attempt be made to prevent the debate taking? It is because the debate would lay bare a state of things which is disgraceful to the country, and

Mr. WALLACE.

which would show the people of the country facts that they would insist upon their representatives legislating on the subject in such an emphatic manner that they could not avoid doing so. We all know that, if this motion is carried, it will do away with the Bill for the present year at any rate. Procrastination is the thief of time, and we do not know what may happen before another Session, we do not know what devices may be brought forward before another Session takes place. Though it is late in the Session when this Bill is proposed for the second reading, the hon. gentleman is not to blame for that. The Bill has been on the paper for sometime, and it has stood, when it has been called, at the request of the Government, at the request of hon. members who profess to desire to put a law of this kind on the Statute-book of this country. Now, without giving time for discussion, and on the plea that it is late in the night or early in the morning, it is asked that this Bill should be relegated to a Committee so that it will not have time to be passed this Session. However, I for one propose to go on with this discussion. What are the objects of these trade combinations?

Mr. SPFAKER. The question now is to refer the Bill to the Committee on Banking and Commerce, and the hon. gentleman cannot go into the merits at this time. He can only discuss the opportuneness of the motion.

Mr. SPROULE. I think, if I prove that the necessities of the time are such as to require that immediate attention should be given to this Bill, I shall establish the fact that it should not be sent to that Committee, because everyone will admit that, if it goes to that Committee, it is impossible that it should become law this Session. The eyes of the people of Canada are to-day directed towards the legislators in this Parliament, and those who feel that they are injured by reason of these unlawful combinations expect that every member here will endeavor to pass some law which will restrain them. If we fail to do that, it will be looked upon as an indication of a disposition on the part of this Parliament to put the matter off. It will appear as if the operators in these nefarious lines had brought their operations to bear on the legislators of the country in order to prevent the passage of the Bill. I think the experience of a few days or weeks will prove the truth of what I say, because the efforts which have been made to prevent the passage of this Bill by manufacturers and middlemen and others who have resorted to illegal means for that purpose are so well known to hon. members that many of them dislike to refer to them. I think we will find that the people in general will imagine that these means have been resorted to for the express purpose of burking legislation on this subject during this present Session.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I would just point out to the hon. gentleman that I suppose he does not expect to get through the Bill to-night. Well, then, if he does not get through the Bill to-night, it will stand over till next Monday.

Mr. SPROULE. I understand that it is on the Orders of the day among Government Orders.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Oh, yes; so it was, but if you choose to take it out of the hands of the Government, you must manage it after your own fashion.

Mr. CURRAN. I merely wish to say that there are a certain number of persons interested in various branches of trade, railway companies, insurance companies and others, who are anxious to be heard before the Committee on Banking and Commerce, who have representations to make; and in view of the discussion of this Bill, and the many defects that were pointed out, and which could have