

Combines Investigation Act

exclusively within provincial jurisdiction under our constitution, can be brought into general operation.

I think as Canadians we should be very proud of the fact that over the years under different governments, Liberal and Conservative—and of course those are the only governments we have ever had in Canada—

An hon. Member: Or likely ever will have.

Mr. Drew: As someone has said, or likely ever will have—we have seen a real attempt to deal with the problems which are national in scope but which nevertheless are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces. I think we can compliment ourselves on the good will and spirit of co-operation that have been displayed in Canada so that over many long years agreement has been reached as to ways in which all doubts could be removed and the jurisdiction of both dominion and provincial governments exercised on behalf of the people by legislation covering both the dominion and the provincial fields. Without extending the legal argument at this time, I do suggest that it would be well for caution to be exercised with regard to this bill, and that most certainly before a measure of such sweeping powers comes into effect, with its impact upon the whole mercantile and commercial life of Canada, every last possibility that it may not be within the jurisdiction of this parliament should be removed.

It would be a most unfortunate thing if legislation were passed which greatly disturbed our whole mercantile and commercial system and it was then found that the act was ultra vires; because then we would have a great deal of difficulty in unscrambling the egg which we had scrambled so effectively. I think the whole tendency on this continent for many long years has been to recognize that unrestrained and unbridled competition in the end injures the consumer more than any other person in the community. When arguments are made by the government that they are so concerned with the welfare of the consumer, let it be remembered that unrestrained and unbridled competition has been harmful to the consumer, and that because of that recognized fact it has been the consumer most of all under our democratic system who has insisted that there be some appropriate restraints on competition which could have a damaging effect upon the economic and commercial life of this or any other country.

The idea of absolutely pure and unrestrained competition is of course an idea that gained some favour more than a hundred

years ago and resulted in the most shocking working conditions, the most shocking employment of young people and the most shameful abuse of the power of money. It was that situation which led to the introduction of many of the laws which over the years have brought us step by step to this day when it can be safely said that there is a consciousness at all times in the minds of the members of our parliament and our legislatures that it is the welfare of our people generally, and of those people least able to look after their own safety and security, that should at all times be the first concern of parliament and of the laws we pass.

Hard competition, as it may be described, is no longer supported in theory by any people who have studied the history of that period. But let us make no mistake; this bill is a return to hard competition. It is an assertion of the doctrine of the Manchester school of more than one hundred years ago. The bill simply throws to the wolves those who cannot stand the strain imposed by the wealth of the larger businesses. That was the point put forward by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Noseworthy), and in this case I have no hesitation in accepting the validity of his contention. There is of course the other type of competition which has come to be described as soft competition. That is competition where there is no real effort to compete, where there is a blanket over everything, where the state says what will be done and everybody conforms to regulations.

One of the problems that presents itself to my mind today is to know just which of these two doctrines the members of the C.C.F. party are really supporting at this time, because I was under the impression—of course I may be wrong—that the C.C.F. party was committed to the idea of soft competition. I thought the C.C.F. party was committed to the idea that the government should decide what the basis should be, and in fact unless I have wholly misinterpreted the statement of the leader of that party that is what he is recommending in this case.

Mr. Coldwell: That is correct.

Mr. Drew: I am glad to have my mind cleared on that. That is what is known as soft competition. That is known as the parasol type of trading.

Mr. Noseworthy: What school is that?

Mr. Drew: That is the C.C.F. school. That is the school where the government creates a parasol. Underneath the parasol are little figures which the ordinary trader is supposed