

go to the producer and purchase by co-operation or any other way? Every facility should be given them to co-operate and get over heavy exactions in the way of profits of middlemen. For these reasons, I intend to support the motion of the hon. leader of the House, and I think we should certainly go into committee on the Bill

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I rise for the purpose of taking exception to the doctrine laid down by the hon. gentleman from Marshfield as to the powers of the Senate and of the committee. If his theory be correct, our action in this House results in a mere farce. In the first place, he said that the Senate having concurred in the second reading of the Bill, therefore, they confirmed the principle of the Bill, and that therefore the committee had no right to interfere with the principle involved in the Bill. To that position I take exception. In the first place, it has been understood for years past that the second reading of a Bill by either House of parliament does not confirm in the minds of those who permit it to pass without objection the principle of the Bill. That has been conceded over and over again. Otherwise we should decide the principle of the Bill on second reading. In referring a Bill to a committee it is always understood that that committee can deal with it as it pleases. It often occurs with private Bills and more particularly public Bills, and even in the case of government Bills, that the government consents to a reference of them to a special committee to consider the principle as well as the provisions of the Bill. Parliament has that right, and, having that right, they refer a Bill to a special committee, and that special committee has the power to deal with the Bill as the majority think proper. They must, after having affirmed the position they hold upon the principle or details of the Bill, report their conclusions to the Senate, and the Senate then takes such action as it feels necessary on the question. In this case, the measure was discussed for hours, and the committee came to a decision upon the Bill with instructions to report it to the Senate. It is for the Senate to say whether they will concur in the views of the committee or reject them. The position we are in is

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON.

this: instead of the motion for the adoption of the report being considered, we are considering a motion in amendment to refer the Bill to a Committee of the Whole. That is quite in accord with our rules and with parliamentary usage. It is for the Senate to say now whether the report of the committee shall not be adopted and that the Bill shall be referred to a Committee of the Whole House. If that motion should carry, it is for the committee to decide what they will report to you, Mr. Speaker, after considering the measure. When the committee meets, it may come to a conclusion that the views of the special committee are not in the interests of the country, and that the Bill should become law. Then when that report is made, it is for the Senate to take action as to whether they will concur in the report of the committee or reject it. If there is any other rule or practice which justifies the statement that the committee exceeds its power in dealing with any measure, or any abstract principle involving the resolution, I am not aware of it. The Senate in session has the power to deal with any of these questions as the majority think proper. In this case, the Bill was referred to the Committee on Banking and Commerce to deal with it. Whether their report meets with the approval of the Senate, is altogether another question. I cannot concede a more absurd position to take than to say that because the Bill was referred to a committee, that they are restricted in the action they should take upon it, unless there be special instructions to the committee to deal with it in a particular way. I do not propose to enter into a discussion as to whether this is a Bill affecting trade and commerce, or even the constitutional aspect of the question. That I shall leave for those who have probably given the matter more study than I have done. If I could convince myself that it is within our jurisdiction, and not an interference with provincial rights, the principle of the Bill should have my support; but having taken the position I have assumed on the question of provincial rights, and our interference with the rights and prerogatives of the provinces, I do not propose to stultify myself.