

"Q. Exactly, it is the list of the guild; but at the same time you exercise supervision over it that the changes must be within reason, as you call it?"

"A. Well, if they were very marked I would ask the reason why.

"Q. You would consider yourself at liberty to break the agreement?"

"A. I consider myself at liberty to break the agreement at any time without reason. It is perfectly voluntary.

"Q. It is an agreement as long as you are satisfied with the list?"

"A. As long as I am satisfied that the thing is, as I believe it is, honestly and fairly conducted.

"Q. Fairly and honestly, as between you and the guild?"

"A. And the public."

HON. MR. SMITH—Is that the evidence that was given before the committee the other day?

HON. MR. READ—No; this was the evidence before the Combines Committee in the House of Commons two years ago.

HON. MR. MCINNES (B. C.)—Will the hon. gentleman inform the House whose evidence he is reading.

HON. MR. READ—I said I would not mention names. The witness is asked:

"Q. Well, the public, according to you, have no say in the matter whatever. Their interests are simply affected as to the advance which you and the guild agree upon, that the sugar must be sold at. The public have no control over the agreement in any way whatever. The agreement is not an agreement between the guild and you and the public; it is an agreement between you and the guild which affects the public. Is that not so?"

"A. Well, that is a very long question.

HON. MR. KAULBACH—Whose evidence is this?

HON. MR. READ—I said I would not give names, but if you will have it, it is the evidence of Mr. George Alexander Drummond:

"Q. Had the public any control over the agreement?"

"A. Well, you covered that.

"Q. I understand that the public have no control over the agreement?"

"A. Well—

"Q. Do you say that they have?"

"A. I don't know; we will see.

"Q. I want you to answer that question. I put the question; I would like an answer?"

"A. I don't think a gentleman should ask a question like that; it is wasting time.

"Q. A few minutes ago I asked you about the control over that list, and it is an agreement between you and the guild, and you say affected not only you and the guild, but the public, and that leads up to the question whether the public have any control over that agreement?"

"A. That is not the question. It is its effect upon the public I have to take into consideration, and I maintain, and they maintain, that the public cannot get the service of distribution on any cheaper terms. That is the full extent to which the public is interested."

I could go on and read more of the evidence, but I think I have read sufficient to show that the public have no interest in the combine—that they do not know anything about it, and it is no trouble to prove that a combination exists between the wholesale houses and the refineries—an alliance is entered into between them, and that is as far as it has gone. You want to buy some sugar. You have your money in your hand and ask for a quantity; you are told that you do not belong to the guild, and that therefore you have to pay $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. advance or $\frac{3}{8}$, or in some instances $\frac{1}{2}$ a cent advance because you do not belong to the combine. These things I think are not to be desired. I do not think they should exist in a free country; and it is a grievance that we should try to remedy at the earliest date possible. It is within the knowledge of this House that some 212,000,000 of pounds, or nearly the whole of the sugar consumed in this country, passes through the hands of the refiners. They have the opportunity of taking toll on that, and you can easily see that on such an enormous quantity if the $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per pound is the profit of the combine it will make over one million of dollars. So you can see this is a pretty sweet morsel. This is divided amongst a few, and it is taken out of the pockets of the people of the country. It is singular, when we come to notice it, the small proportion of sugar that is consumed by the people in this country as compared with other countries. I do not wish to say anything more about the reason why it is so. I know very well what the reason is, I know the remedy, and I suppose time will provide it. If the only combination was on sugar we might be satisfied, but when we see combinations springing up in other trades we begin to feel alarmed. There is now a combination in salt to a certain extent. There is a combination amongst the grocers as to the price of tobacco. There is combination more or less in everything used in domestic life, from the cradle to the grave—a combination on infants' food and a combination of undertakers, that bear you to your last resting place. To the grave you must go, but you cannot be wheeled there except under the regulations of a combine in Ontario. I do not know that such a combination exists in every part of the Dominion, but it does in Ontario. We have the grocers' combina-