

Combines Investigation Act

has told us since the subamendment was moved that he is not advocating a fair trade law and fair trade practices—

Mr. Coldwell: As in the United States.

Mr. Drew:—as in the United States and as contemplated here in legislation actually introduced into and passed by this parliament on earlier occasions. He is urging the setting up of a board which would take the responsibility of establishing prices at which goods are to be sold. That is quite contrary to the well-established and well-tested fair trade practices which have been developed over the years in the United States and which we have tried to put into effect here.

I do not think we should apologize at any time for examining what they do in the United States, because in so far as trade practices are concerned their whole system is so similar to ours, or shall we say that ours in many ways has become related to theirs, that the methods they find desirable may well be found very desirable here also. In that regard I wish to interject the comment that I am not suggesting now, and I do not believe I ever shall suggest, that we should simply follow the United States in the things they do because of their size or wealth, but rather we should recognize what they do in dealing with problems similar to our own with an acceptance of the inescapable fact that in this stage of the world's development their trade and commerce exceeds that of any other country in the world.

What we are doing is placing before the house a subamendment which would ask hon. members to support the suggestion that consideration be given to the setting up of a fair trade commission. We do not attempt to draft the bill. That is not our responsibility; but may I also say we do not believe the government is in a position to draft such a bill at the present time. We are not asking that the drafting of this bill conform to the views of any particular group in the community. What we do say is that the bill should be drafted with a full recognition of the general welfare of the people of Canada, and most of all of those who in their day by day activities are bound to deal with the small merchants throughout the country who give that intimate daily service which has become very much a part of the life of our people.

I had hoped that the subamendment actually interpreted the views of the C.C.F. party, since we had not been able to interpret their own explanation; but as it does not then we certainly hope that, inasmuch as we are only asking for consideration of a fair

trade commission, and since one of the spokesmen for the C.C.F. party has made it clear that he does not think this measure should pass—in fact the leader of their party has made that clear—we hope they will support the subamendment. I notice that the leader of the C.C.F. party, without actually raising any question, indicates that he does not approve of what I have said as to his being concerned about its being passed at this stage. It would be a strange thing for him to introduce an amendment which says that the bill should stand for further consideration, and at the same time tell us that it should pass.

Mr. Coldwell: May I just state that the only way the amendment could be drawn was that the bill should “not be read a second time now.”

Mr. Drew: I had hoped it meant actually what it said, that further consideration should be given. I would point out to the leader of the C.C.F. party that the purpose of the amendment he put forward cannot be carried into effect unless there is time for further consideration, because he is proposing certain measures which obviously have not been dealt with yet in the house. However, I am not seeking to put words in his mouth, and if it is a fact that he thinks it is quite proper to deal with this legislation I accept that. But I would point out that the hon. member for York South (Mr. Noseworthy) does not hold that opinion.

Mr. Coldwell: Oh, yes.

Mr. Drew: The hon. member for York South said: “I do not know what the government is doing, rushing this legislation through.” That is what we are saying. We just cannot understand it. We have not heard any evidence yet which supports the haste that is indicated. We have not heard one word uttered in this house suggesting a single reason why the legislation could not stand over until the next regular session of parliament so that an adequate opportunity might be given to consider it. I would point out further that the hon. member for York South made an extremely interesting statement which I wish the C.C.F. members would bear in mind when they vote on the subamendment as well as their own amendment. He said—and I believe I am using almost his exact words, but in any event I believe I am accurately paraphrasing what he said—it is general knowledge that large businesses and chain stores will drive small retailers to the wall unless measures are taken to prevent that being done. That is exactly what we say.

We say that the bill simply prohibits, without any consideration with respect to public necessity, any agreements as to maintained