

at large would suffer from them, because I could not conceive that such combinations should exist, fraught with such danger to this country and to the people as I know do exist at the present time. I see no reason why a few ringsters should say to the whole of the country: "We will toll everything you use, and we shall put the money in our pockets." The country will say: "No, gentlemen, you cannot do that." By wise legislation they will say it, because it is by legislation we formed these combines and by legislation we can abolish them. I am sorry to say that in some instances combines have been brought about by the legislation of this country, but by legislation they can be removed. The people at large are interested, and the fact that not one member of the House of Commons rose in his place to oppose the repeal of our amendment shows that the people are in earnest. It passed the House of Commons unanimously, showing that the people knowing their own interests are looking after them, and at the polls they will look after them, if we refuse to give them the justice they are seeking for at our hands.

Now, I will take up what I consider to be one of the combinations that materially interests the people at large. The chairman told us that sometimes combinations were in the interests of the public. I will prove to him that they are in the interests of the few. Take the sugar industry. Our sugar refiners have the privilege in this country of saying to whom they shall or shall not sell. And why? Because the people cannot buy any place else.

HON. MR. SCOTT—The National Policy again.

HON. MR. READ—The National Policy; I freely admit it. We have given them that opportunity and they have been recreant to their trust. They have combined with others to do acts which, while they may call them reasonable from their own point of view, take an unreasonable amount of money from the public and put it in their own pockets. It may seem only a small amount on each pound of sugar, but when you come to estimate the quantity consumed you find that it comes to a very large amount. What are the refiners combined to do? They are combined to say: "We will sell only to certain parties, and they shall be wholesale

dealers who belong to the combine. If you do not belong to the combine you must pay us a certain amount more." I heard a gentleman giving his evidence before the committee that was appointed to enquire into this question of combines two years ago, and there were many others present who were much interested in this legislation; gentlemen came from Toronto and Montreal in large numbers to attend this committee. Now, why do wholesale men leave their business and come here before a committee to protest against anti-combine legislation if they are not vitally interested? One gentleman, who would not go into the combine, stated that it cost him 80 cents per barrel more for sugar than it did the members of the combine, and those other gentlemen did not deny it, although there were many members of the combine present. No one attempted to deny it. This man had said: "I will not join your unholy alliance; I will not be squeezed; I will suffer first," and he did suffer, by having to pay 80 cents a barrel more for his sugar than members of the combine. I heard the evidence given myself, and I will read some of it to the House presently. If these are facts—if even one man is unduly oppressed by such a combination it is the duty of Parliament to prevent it. When the masses are forced to put their hands in their pockets and contribute to the coffers of such a combination I think it is the duty of Parliament to step in and redress the grievance. We find people, who cannot afford it, leaving their business and coming here from Toronto and other places to protest against the emasculation of this Bill. It may be said that the Bill has no effect upon their business, that they do not feel it; but they know it has, and they come here and ask the House to place them in such a position that under the law justice can be obtained.

I think it will not be necessary to prove that these combinations exist, and I need not do anything more than quote from the evidence taken before the Combines Committee to prove my case. A gentleman is under examination before that committee, and he knows what he is talking about. I will not mention names, because it is not necessary. The question is asked by Mr. Fisher:—

"Q. I understand you to say that the guild controls the list but at the same time —

"A. It is the list of the guild.