

Mr. CAHAN: Why not constitute a new board under the act, chapter 59 of 1935?

Mr. ROGERS: It was called the Dominion Trade and Industry Commission. The members—

Mr. CAHAN: Were declared to be the members of the tariff board.

Mr. ROGERS: That was a temporary provision.

Mr. CAHAN: It may have been temporary, but at any rate there has been no change up to this time, and there was no undertaking, as I understand it, that the work would be given to another commission.

Mr. ROGERS: I think at the time there was a general feeling, which was expressed at this session by the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Church), that we were setting up too many commissions and that it would be better to combine the work of the two. At all events what we are doing now is ensuring that the administration of the combines act will receive the undivided attention of one commissioner, or, if the work should require it at some later date, a commission of possibly three members. Here again I give no undertaking, and obviously cannot; but to enlarge the commission to three at some future time if the work demands it would seem to be the obvious course to follow.

Mr. BENNETT: But the commission has been with the other commission ever since, administering this act.

Mr. ROGERS: It is not really administering the act, if I may say so; because while some questions arose as to the legality of the trade and industry act, the combines act has not been administered by that commission. I think that undoubtedly the tariff board, in assuming that additional function, has found itself severely handicapped. There has been no effective administration of the combines act in the past year and a half.

Mr. BENNETT: And no director of prosecutions has been named.

Mr. ROGERS: No director of prosecutions has been named. That of course touches a point that goes beyond the administration of the Combines Investigation Act.

Mr. BENNETT: But it touches the whole matter.

Mr. ROGERS: Yes. I think there is very much to be said for so arranging the administration of the combines act that it will come under the continuous supervision of one man or one group of men, and certainly, if com-

binés exist to the extent suggested by some hon. members, there is every reason why the administration of the combines act, apart entirely from the other duties imposed upon the Dominion Trade and Industry Commission, should be administered by one commissioner. There is much to be said, I think, for some continuity in the working out of the provisions of this act. In times past, and I am speaking now of the period before the Dominion Trade and Industry Commission was set up, the actual investigations apart from preliminary inquiries were conducted by ad hoc commissions. The result was that the country was put to the very considerable expense of appointing ad hoc commissioners, and there was none of that continuity of experience which is valuable in carrying on this act.

Perhaps I ought to say something about the transfer to the Department of Labour. Certainly this does not imply an appropriation by the Department of Labour of a field that was not once its own.

Mr. BENNETT: It was not suggested that that is so.

Mr. ROGERS: I quite agree. It is a question rather of a return to the Department of Labour after a temporary transfer to the president of the privy council for the reasons suggested by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett). I would however like to express my own view that there is much to be said in favour of having the administration by the Department of Labour as against the Department of Trade and Commerce. After all the Department of Trade and Commerce is set up primarily in order to provide facilities for the industries and commercial firms of this country—and properly so. But I question if it would be wise to have the administration of this act designed to prevent abuses among industries and commercial firms placed in the department which at the same time had, and was intended to have, a very intimate and close relationship with those firms. I submit again that there are strong reasons why the administration of the combines act should be placed under a separate commissioner, and I believe there are good reasons, which perhaps will not be considered as such by hon. members opposite, why the administration of the Combines Act should be placed in the Department of Labour rather than in the Department of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. BENNETT: The minister knows it had no personal reference.

Mr. ROGERS: Yes, quite.