

I now turn to a quotation from a speech delivered in 1895, after the policy had been in operation. An extract from the budget speech delivered by Sir George Foster, the then Minister of Finance, is as follows:

If there is to be a protective system at all, everybody knows it must be higher in its inception than as the years gradually pass, when industries have become established and when the industrial development of the country grows apace.

Again I point out that the framers of the national policy never contemplated the growth of great monopolies under that policy, nor in later years did the framers of the Combines Investigation Act contemplate that in spite of that act great monopolies would dominate, as the report has stated, branches of industry in which they are engaged to a degree of almost complete monopoly.

Sir, there is one other interesting quotation I should like to read, because it shows the attitude of the Liberal party of that day towards this problem. I rather welcome these words because they give an indication of the tolerant spirit shown by that great party at that time towards the policy,—making a certain reservation. This is a quotation from a speech of Alexander Mackenzie delivered in 1877:

I have no objection to the principle of protection per se; that is, if you can make everybody wealthy without making any person poor. If that is the principle of protection, I am quite in favour of it, if the plan by which it is to be achieved can be shown.

I admit the words sound a little facetious, but I submit further that what they did disclose was the attitude of the leader of the Liberal party of that day, namely, that he had no objection to the principle of protection, if it would result in benefits to the people generally,—and of course to industry, providing it did not result in the creation of iniquities within the industrial system.

Again I say it is futile to look back, with our present knowledge and to say that those of that day should have looked to the future and should have realized that mass production would develop, that the machine age would grow, and that men would be thrown out of work by the tens of thousands through the mechanization of industry and agriculture. These conditions were not foreseen. They were not foreseen twenty years ago, even; they were not foreseen in their present magnitude until they were, in a sense, upon us. But this point stands out clearly, that the framers of the national policy, so-called, never contemplated the creation in this country of industrial groups so powerful that

they could defy government as well as competition. And, sir, throughout our examinations of the past eighteen months, condensed now in the form of this report, it is clear that these great industrial organizations have developed. It does not necessarily follow that they have grown great because of efficiency. That is clearly stated in the report which is presented as a result of our examinations. On the other hand, it is therein stated—this is certainly my firm conviction and I have seen no contradiction of it by other members of the commission—that it was the power of massed capital rather than efficiency which caused or gave power to these great industries. I agree that some members of the commission would qualify that statement, in part, but my conviction is that it is far more due to the control of wealth or capital by these institutions than by their efficiency that they have gained their position of great power.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question.

Mr. STEVENS: Yes.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Was the hon. gentleman in Canada in the early nineties? Was he a resident of Canada in the early nineties?

Mr. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what my personal history has to do with this discussion.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): A matter of curiosity.

Mr. STEVENS: If it would satisfy the hon. member I could give a brief statement, if that is what the hon. gentleman wishes to come at. As I was not born in Canada probably he questions my right to speak.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): No, not at all.

Mr. STEVENS: I was born in a city—no mean city—the city of Bristol, England. I came to Canada in 1887, and I could tell my hon. friend a good deal more than that about my early experiences in Canada, if it would serve any purpose. But I do not see why a man's personal life as a boy in this country has anything to do with it.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Mr. Speaker, the question was asked in all sincerity. I merely questioned as to whether the hon. member was a resident in the nineties.

Mr. STEVENS: I will set it down to my dullness in failing to see the point.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Oh, I see.