

Combines Investigation Act

course that they have read the bill and, having done so, they must have annotated it. Therefore they will have no excuse for depriving us of the benefit of their study, knowledge and practical spirit.

Just one further word in closing. Either Mr. McGregor was right or Mr. McGregor was wrong. He could not be right and wrong at the same time.

Mr. Hodgson: Did you hear that on the street, too?

Mr. Pouliot: I would ask the hon. member to speak more distinctly; there is a lot of wisdom in what he says.

Mr. Speaker: May I ask hon. members not to interrupt.

Mr. Pouliot: I thank you, Mr. Speaker; but I appreciate it when I am interrupted provided I know what is being said. That is why I would be most grateful to the hon. member if he would repeat the same thing, but distinctly so that I could hear it.

Mr. Brooks: He wanted to know if it was the man in the street talking.

Mr. Pouliot: I should like to have it repeated so that with my limited knowledge of the English language I could understand it.

Hon. members who have spoken cannot at the same time be both for and against the bill. That is what happened when the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker), who is otherwise well informed, said that he wanted the legislation to pass, but was at the same time obstructing its passage.

Mr. Homuth: No, no.

Mr. Pouliot: The hon. member for Waterloo South was not here when it occurred, and what he has learned from hearsay is all wrong. This is most farcical and cannot be taken seriously. I hope the hon. gentlemen who have said that they are anxious to have legislation against combines will act with logic and vote for the second reading of this bill. If they want to compensate for the time lost in discussing amendments that were out of order they should let the bill pass on division and save some of the time that has been wasted.

Mr. H. O. White (Middlesex East): Mr. Speaker, in view of what has been said during the past day or two with regard to procedure I am somewhat at a loss to know where I should start and where I should finish. It seems difficult to discuss the amendments to the Combines Investigation Act without referring occasionally to what has occurred in the past and trying to find a way to correct that in the future. The net result of some of the things disclosed yesterday by the minister is

[Mr. Pouliot.]

that every labourer or breadwinner in Canada has paid more for his bread than he should have over a long period of time. The minister referred to the flour milling companies and the squeeze that had occurred between the rise in the price of wheat and the setting of the ceiling price of flour. However, the milling companies were protected by subsidies and fixed floor prices and the result was that the only man being squeezed was the man who had to buy his daily bread.

Then it was said that the price of mill feeds was kept down. Mill feeds were scarce during that period and the farmers could not get them. Why? Because they were being exported at higher prices. That is why bacon, eggs, butter and milk were high in price or scarce, as in the case of butter. No wonder the people in the cities complained about the high cost of living. That is the reason, and that is why the workers in many industries went on strike for higher wages.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few remarks on the second reading of this bill. While I support wholeheartedly the remarks of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) with respect to the action of the government, I am going to confine my remarks to the principle of the bill which I understand is the strengthening of the enforcement of the Combines Investigation Act and to some related matters. The explanatory note reads:

The amendments provided in this bill are designed to facilitate enforcement of the Combines Investigation Act, and of related Criminal Code provisions. They relate to court procedure concerning undue monopolistic trade restrictions and unlawful combinations in restraint of trade.

While we are supporting this bill to improve the enforcement of the Combines Investigation Act we are of the opinion that the act and the amending bill represent a Victorian and outmoded method of tackling a twentieth century problem. This attempt to improve the enforcement of this act will prove insufficient in the future. A careful examination of history in the United States and Canada will give some validity to my argument. We know the history of the development of monopolies in the United States and the efforts made by various United States administrations, commencing most noticeably with the administration of President Teddy Roosevelt, to control and restrain monopolies and to provide for fair practices in business.

The United States have possibly had more effective legislation in this regard than we have had in Canada, but a United States Senate committee report indicates that the tendency toward monopolistic practices has