

*Supply—Justice*

Following the report of the restrictive trade practices commission into any particular case, which normally does not take too long, and following upon receipt by the minister of the report, again an exceptionally long period appears to elapse between the filing of the report or the making public of it and the decision or action taken with regard to prosecution. This sugar case to which I refer is a case in point.

I have here the report of the restrictive trade practices commission dated January 7, 1957. That is the date of the transmission of the report from the restrictive trade practices commission to the then minister of justice. It is now over two years later. I can appreciate the fact that there were some political activities during two of the years intervening, namely two elections that may have upset things. Almost two and a half years have elapsed between the completion of the report of the restrictive trade practices commission in the sugar case and we have just about reached the stage, as I gather it, where prosecution will be entered into in court. That appears to be a period of over two and a half years, an exceptionally long period of time to consider the report itself and to consider whether or not there are sufficient grounds to prosecute. In the normal cases that we hear of, apart from the delays that take place once the case comes into court, which is another matter again, there appears to be quite a lapse of time, unnecessarily so, between when the investigations are completed by the director of investigation research and his staff and the time when the final decision is made as to whether to prosecute or not.

We had the same discussions during the last session on these same estimates about an additional two competitions that were being engaged in then for additional staff members. I should like to know whether those two positions have been filled and the competitions completed and whether the minister feels there is sufficient staff, in view of the long period of time that elapses in these cases, properly to cope with all the problems arising. We shall have some opportunity at a later stage in the house to discuss and debate the actual combines investigation legislation itself because there is an amendment to the Combines Investigation Act and to those applicable sections of the Criminal Code which will give us an opportunity to deal with the legislative angle of this matter.

However, there is one question which I think should be dealt with by the branch and one which may have been given some thought and consideration but certainly it

has not been delved into to any extent, to my knowledge since 1945. I refer to the effect upon our Canadian economy and Canadian companies of the operation of so-called international cartels. Without referring to the record I believe that in 1945 under the instance of the then minister of labour there was an inquiry into the nature and effect of international cartels, so-called, and trade combinations in so far as Canada was concerned. The report goes extensively into a number of items and mentions that Canada like other countries was detrimentally affected by the operation of these so-called international cartels.

The report of 1945 gives examples of the participation of Canadian companies in certain types of cartels and the effect of cartels upon Canada and the prices Canadians are charged for goods and so on.

I wish to refer to some of the materials and commodities covered in this report to give the committee some appreciation of those products in respect of which Canadians were at the mercy of cartels in 1945. The report mentions, among other things, fertilizers including potash, nitrogen and phosphorus; tanning materials, quebraco flat glass, sulphur, dyestuffs, tools, magnesia refractories, titanium pigments, chemicals, soda ash, electric lamps, radio tubes and sets, matches, base metals including copper, lead, zinc, and nickel; steel, aluminum, acetic acid, radium and newsprint. The report points out that in one way or another Canada was at the mercy of corporations which operated outside of the boundaries of the nation with respect to these commodities.

I know, for instance, that the aluminum cartel has been in operation in the world for the past 50 years. The world was carved up into markets. Certain prices were charged and arrangements were made between certain companies under which they would not sell their commodities in markets that had been allocated to other companies. The same situation has obtained in respect of other products as well, some of which I have listed in the brief running account I just gave.

It would appear in view of Canada's present status in terms of industrial production that the time is long past due when we should undertake a study similar in nature to that conducted in 1945 in an effort to determine the effect upon our economy of these so-called international cartels. I should not care to go into detail concerning the work involved in the investigation or how it should be conducted but certainly the terms of reference of the 1945 report would serve as a basis for a further study.

[Mr. Howard.]