

honourable members refuse to give even to the Minister and the Commissioner under that Act the authority to go ahead and undertake to secure, in the quiet way in which such things have been handled in years gone by, such information as may be necessary to prove whether or not there is a combine which is contrary to the interests of the consuming public. In listening to some of the honourable gentlemen in the Banking and Commerce Committee one would have thought the Combines Investigation Act had not been of much moment in the years gone by. I will admit that a dose of chloroform was administered to it in 1931, and that since that time it has been moribund, almost dead, doing nothing because those who were in control of its operation were unfriendly to it and unwilling to see done the things which on the Statute Book it was said should be done and which in previous years had been done.

Now let us see what, in brief, was done under the Combines Investigation Act, for it would not be improper right here to place some of the facts on record. In 1926, as a result of the allegation that a very serious combine was operating to the detriment of the public, both producers and consumers, in the province of British Columbia, an officer was appointed to go out to that province and ascertain the facts. He happened to be a legal gentleman from the city of Toronto. After he had ascertained the facts and made his report, in which it was indicated that a very serious and detrimental combine against the public interest was in effect, further action was taken and the matter was submitted to the Attorneys-General of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba—for the combine operated in all four of those provinces—with the result that those Attorneys-General requested the Federal Government to assign counsel to prosecute in accordance with the findings made by the Commissioner. The final outcome of the prosecution was that eight persons were fined \$25,000 each, and paid in fines a total of \$200,000.

Then we had another alleged combine in the years 1929 and 1930—the Amalgamated Builders' Council. As a result of investigation and prosecution in that case the following fines were imposed: on May 12, 1930, one fine of \$10,000, one fine of \$3,000, one fine of \$4,000, and one fine of \$8,000; on May 26 another fine of \$1,000; and on June 18 a further fine of \$500. But that did not close that particular investigation, for in 1931 the following additional fines were imposed: one of \$8,000, one of \$1,600, one of \$1,100, and another of \$8,000.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK.

Then we had the Electrical Estimators' Association inquiry, which started in 1930, before the chloroform had been administered, and concluded in 1932. This resulted in fines of \$17,500 and \$8,700.

Then came the case of the Canadian Basket Pool, which ended in 1933 with the collection of fines amounting to \$1,500.

Now I come to an important part of the work of the Combines Investigation Act which has a direct bearing upon the view which I hold, that the arguments adduced and the action taken on this question before the Banking and Commerce Committee indicated to a great extent that there is one law for the rich and another law for the poor. We find that an investigation was launched against the importers of British coal, and that on December 12, 1933, it had got to the point where fines were imposed: one of \$5,000, one of \$7,000, another of \$5,000, another of \$7,000, and one of \$6,000; or \$30,000 all told. As honourable members know, an appeal was taken and the activities of the department under the Combines Investigation Act were questioned. A little later, as a result of the decision handed down, further fines were imposed of \$5,000, \$5,000, \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500.

Why should I say there is one law for the rich and one for the poor? It is because of the fact, as I see it, that sitting on the Banking and Commerce Committee was a gentleman who had paid one of those substantial fines. Why? Because from the pockets of the poor he had been extracting money to which he was not entitled, and because it was held a crime had been committed against the people of Canada, consumers and producers. But that is not all. Also sitting as a member of the Banking and Commerce Committee was one of the distinguished legal gentlemen who held views opposite to the views of the authorities who made the decision fining his client. Do not take my word for it. The record will tell the story. It will show whether he was not most prominent in contending against the further operation of the Combines Investigation Act and in desiring to hamstring it, and whether he was not filled with bitterness and resentment because the case against his client had been lost, and because his client had been fined a substantial amount of money under that Act. The record will show whether he was not strenuously arguing against and opposing any action that would give anybody the right to examine into the facts of a case and see if there could be a malefactor in high place or if it was only among the poor and lowly that the grafter and the thief were to be found.