

*Government Organization*

of which will be more particularly to ensure a closer study of combines, monopolies and bankruptcy.

With this in mind, I want to make a few remarks at this stage in order to point out certain things to the man who will be responsible for administering this new department.

Some time ago I had the occasion of forwarding to a friend of mine, who is the manager of a company of pre-mixed concrete the report on restrictive trade practises covering the operations of four pre-mixed concrete companies.

My friend, who heads one of the most flourishing industries of this type in operation in the region of St. Hyacinthe, went through this report with great care, and then sent his remarks to me. In those remarks, that I shall do my best to paraphrase my correspondent said that the way the government deals with the matter of combines is a farce and a tragedy detrimental to our citizens.

In his letter, my friend refers to four companies which agreed to fix the prices of their products.

He says to me: "You see, the commission works unceasingly at gathering evidence against those four small companies which are interested in their work and want to keep afloat, while the same commission pays no attention to large combines."

For instance, he says: "At this time, there are four cement plants in this country: the Miron company, the St. Lawrence Cement Company, the Canada Cement Company and the Quebec cement plant. When we ask them to quote on our cement supplies, each and everyone of them puts in the same price; there is no difference; they agreed to quote identical prices." It is absolutely impossible for those who have to buy such products to get a better price from one given company.

Further, in his letter this citizen of the constituency of Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot says that the same situation exists among oil refineries: "If you ask for a quotation from British American, Imperial Oil, Fina, or Shell, for asphalt cement, you will get only one price."

Mr. Speaker, I make these remarks in order to bring to the attention of the minister who will be responsible for the administration of this new department the fact that the legislation will have to be applied unilaterally, that is to every company regardless of their business status or importance.

You can understand as I do that some companies which are not as sound financially

[Mr. Ricard.]

as others in the field of pre-mixed cement might be subject to very inconvenient effects, which will prevent them from facing up to existing competitors, much less scrupulous and law-abiding.

I should like to add that the incumbent of this new department will certainly have the opportunity to implement a request made to him some time ago by the minister of justice of the province of Quebec, with regard to the setting-up of an inquiry into fraudulent bankruptcies and organized crime.

However, when the department is in operation, the person who asked for that inquiry will certainly not be responsible for the administration of justice in Quebec, since another government will have been elected by the people of that province. It is appropriate, however, to support the request made by Mr. Claude Wagner, because many things could be learned, if such an inquiry were instituted.

I agree with the federal Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin) when he states that here, in Ottawa, we do not have only spineless people. I am convinced that the creation of this new department will prove this to those who try to represent everyone connected with parliament in Ottawa as second-class citizens, fearful of responsibilities.

Just like the Minister of Justice, I am somewhat annoyed at people calling us fearful and spineless. According to them, it is always helpful to call on Ottawa to get some money, but they always strive to show that under an unfavorable light.

We have here citizens who come from the province of Quebec and are most anxious to be worthy of the confidence placed in them by the citizens of their own constituency.

The sooner we succeed in eliminating the disparagement—the word must be uttered—being carried on towards representatives of the people in Ottawa, the sooner the common good will be served.

We have responsibilities and obligations, and I think we all want to discharge them for the good of our constituents.

I see in the creation of this new department, an opportunity for another member of my province to be useful, not only to his compatriots and his constituents, but to the citizens of Quebec and Canada as a whole.

• (3:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the ground with respect to this bill has been pretty well covered