

in the trade, and that was why he was defending that duty, and I thought they were reliable men. Of course I am satisfied to accept the hon. gentleman's explanation; but, instead of making an attack on the National Policy, he should commend those hon. gentlemen who are proposing this means to remedy a grievance which exists in this country. It is yet in its inception, and the time to stop an evil is when it is not great in magnitude. I think the appointment of this committee will be a warning to those who propose to go into these combines, and it may have the effect of preventing these enormous evils from growing. An investigation of this kind will show how far this country is suffering from the combines. If there is no harm in them, there will be no need to provide a remedy, but if they are an evil, it is characteristic of this Government to provide a remedy. To say that combines are due to the National Policy is to say that which is not borne out by facts. What has a high tariff to do with it when in some cases there is no duty at all; such, for instance, as the combine in the trade to regulate the price of anthracite coal? Now on this there is no duty. This is one of the things that spring up under either a high or low tariff, when the people can combine for the purpose of advancing their own interests. We might refer to various lines. Take the lines of coffins and fixtures in reference to funerals and burial affairs, and we are credibly informed that the cost could be reduced one-half but for the fact that these injurious combines exist at the present time. I think it is right that a committee should be appointed on the subject so as to get the information we need on this matter. If the evils are of the magnitude represented, then the sooner the remedy is applied the better. The member for York (Mr. Wallace), and the hon. gentleman who supported him, are deserving of credit for coming forward at this early stage and endeavoring to elicit correct information on the subject so as to obtain a remedy if the evils are as great as they are represented to be to-day.

Mr. WALLACE. I think the hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Lister) was a little too previous in his denial of the statement of the hon. member for Grey (Mr. Sproule). I read that, last year, in response to the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell), he denies that the foreign oil is better than the Canadian oil, and he says:

"I say that the oil manufactured here is equal to any petroleum oil manufactured in the world. We know perfectly well, as far as the United States are concerned, that the whole oil interest of the United States is practically controlled by the Standard Oil Company, and we know that they have been bringing oil into this country to sell at a less price than the cost of producing it, in order to get the control of this market. It would be against the interest of this large industry to do what my hon. friend suggests.

"Mr. MITCHELL. Is not 100 per cent. enough?

"Mr. LISTER. One hundred per cent.? The moment you strangle that industry you will get the price put up at once."

That is the remedy for these combines that he proposes now. Last year, he said, "Abolish the duty and the price will go up at once." The hon. member further said:

"The people of Canada are, to-day, getting their oil much cheaper than they ever did before. If my hon. friend from the sea thinks he will be able to get it much cheaper, perhaps he would for a time, but the moment the Standard Oil Company came here he would have to pay a higher price, and to put the trade restrictions which my hon. friend proposes here would be to give them an advantage of at least 15 or 20 per cent. more. So long as this is the policy of the Government, that industry—the oil industry—ought to be protected and preserved against the United States as any other in the country. If free trade is to be the order of the day, that interest must go with the rest, unable to exist without a high rate of duty; but if protection is to rule, that industry, which is a Canadian industry, a purely native one, an industry belonging purely to Canada, should be looked after as well as any other."

That was the view last year of the hon. gentleman for West Lambton (Mr. Lister.)

Mr. LISTER. That is my view this year.

Mr. WALLACE. He said, also, that the combines and National Policy must go together. Well, I say, too, Mr.

Speaker, that the combines must go, if they are found to be injurious to the interests of the country, but I say the National Policy must stay. These gentlemen went before the country a year ago, and told almost every constituency, at least in Ontario, that the National Policy was a dead issue, that they did not propose to deal with it, that the policy of protection had been adopted by the country; and their leader, Mr. Blake, in his Malvern speech, reiterated the same doctrine for the Reform party. But as soon as they came back to Parliament they renewed their old animosity against the National Policy and tried to make it responsible for every ill that flesh is heir to. The hon. gentleman said again that the products of manufacture had increased in price on account of the National Policy. Well, Sir, I have said and I repeat it again, that the National Policy has reduced the price of everything manufactured in this country.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh! Oh!

Mr. WALLACE. Yes, I can go over a list of a hundred articles in common use in this country, cotton goods, woollen goods, iron goods, agricultural implements—everything that is consumed by the farmers, by the artisans, by all classes of the people, and I can demonstrate, one after the other, that all these articles are reduced in price on account of the National Policy. Why, take cotton alone. Ten years ago seven and a half million pounds of raw cotton was brought into this country and manufactured, while to-day exactly four times that quantity is manufactured here. More than that, the price of raw cotton ten years ago was almost precisely what it is to-day. What are the facts with reference to the manufacture of cotton. The quality is twice as good as it was then, and the price is 30 to 40 per cent. less than it was then. It is exactly the same with all other goods. But, Sir, the hon. member for West Ontario (Mr. Edgar) by his remarks, has given us to understand, what we all knew before, that his object is not to investigate this matter, but to have a fling at the National Policy. He asks: Why do we not investigate the doings of the manufacturers? Well, if he had read over the motion as carefully as he might have done, he would have found that it covers an investigation into the products of manufacturers as well as the products brought into the country, whether raw material or manufactured articles. The resolution says:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the nature and extent and effect of certain combinations said to exist with reference to the purchase and sale, in Canada, of any foreign or Canadian products.

That, I presume, will include everything manufactured in Canada—to enquire fully into the sale, because we do not enquire how they manufacture their goods, the object is to enquire how they sell them, under what conditions they sell them after they manufacture them. Now, Sir, I state again, what I said before, that the moment we took the duty off coal in this country, it came more directly under the operation of a combine in the United States. The hon. gentleman told us that the combine in the United States regulated the price here. Now, I deny that. I have the evidence of a dealer in coal in the city of Ottawa, who tells me to-day that he can sell coal at any figure he chooses. The combination as to the sale of it is made outside of Canada, and he has the privilege of selling coal at \$4 a ton, if he chooses. There is no restriction in the purchase price in Canada. And so we find that the great evil in regard to coal, is the fact that the dealers in Canada have combines in each of the cities to raise the price, and keep it at a price which is extortionate to those who require to buy. Further, he said that we should have power to do something. Now, I am informed by Dr. Wilson, the Law Clerk of the House, that the resolution as it stands now, carries full power to investigate all things connected with this matter. So far as the amendment is concerned, it is a harmless one. It says, "or