

way of getting American concerns to be able to act in concert, if the Government wishes them to.

Now, that is particularly pertinent to the oil situation. Is there any way right now that if the Government desired a group of American oil companies to cooperate with it in meeting the Russian challenge in the oil field which is very important in Europe, if they could do so?

Mr. LOEVINGER. Senator Javits, I think your real quarrel is with Senator Proxmire; he was attacking me during your absence because we weren't more vigorously seeking to induce greater competition in the oil industry.

Now, regardless of what the various political or economic theories may be, I submit we cannot be at once more and less competitive.

We have got to seek either one or the other solution.

There is, of course, the Webb-Pomerene Act which permits independent enterprises to establish common associations with exemption from antitrust rules for export trade.

I don't know that this has been tried. I think that the question is a difficult one to answer in abstract terms. The oil industry is an extraordinarily complex industry. There are many aspects of it that are already subject to Government control, and to limitations of competition by various governmental measures.

There are a number of provisions under existing law that permit combinations to be undertaken with protection against charges of antitrust violation.

We have had, as a matter of fact, some months ago, extensive conferences with representatives of the Defense Department and the Interior Department, and established an Oil Industry Committee which has been approved by the Attorney General under the Defense Production Act, I believe that is the statutory authority, and which does, in fact, meet and engage in certain activities related to our national defense.

Senator JAVITS. Well, now, may I interrupt you to say that the authority for that has expired?

That statute—that is, the section of the law has been repealed and the committee is now functioning under the authority which you did once have. There is no longer any such authority.

Mr. LOEVINGER. My impression was that the act had been extended for a year.

Senator JAVITS. No.

The authority of the Attorney General to approve a combination of the act; that is, the general authority, has been repealed. It's now subject to approval only for a specific group of procurement contractors, and as a matter of fact, I am waging a little campaign to get the authority restored, but the committee you speak of is functioning under your permissive authority which you had and gave them at the time so if they broke up and you had to have a new one, you could no longer give them any such immunity.

Mr. LOEVINGER. Well, the act—I believe you are correct. There has been the expiration of one of the provisions in the Defense Production Act.

Actually, what has taken place recently is not the formation of a new committee or a new agreement, but a modification of the prior agreement.