

Now I want to deal with another matter and that is in regard to the combines in this country. We have had a law with respect to combines in this country for years and years, and it is coming up in Ontario politics at the present moment. We went after combines in Canada and we passed a law against combines, but we put in that law what? That the enforcement of the law rested on the door-step of the Attorney General of the province and still more on the door-step of the private prosecutor. Now no private prosecutor in this country could afford, or had the courage, to go after the combines. Farmer representatives have been talking in this House, and my friends the farmers from the West have been talking, about combines in this country, but how many of them know that the combines in this country never were arraigned because we never placed the enforcement of the federal law against combinations as part of the duty of the Government or of the Attorney General of Canada?—we left it to the private prosecutor and we left it to the Attorneys General of the provinces. Even the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier told me, when I brought up this question some years ago, and I raised it in connection with my own province of Ontario, "Go to Mr. Foy," who was Attorney General of Ontario at that time. No headway was made on this question. In the United States they are getting after the combines, they are getting after the pork-packers, and in a very few days you will see a very surprising exposure of the packers as a combine in the United States, and you will see the exposure of other combines. You will find cold storage an enormous combine. You will find how the packers of the United States have been getting ahead with their plans notwithstanding that the law and the energy of the United States is against them. They have managed to secure the control of, or are gradually taking over, all the foods. They have taken over the control of the supply of rice that they bring to America. They control the rice product of the Southern States and also that of Asia. They bring the foreign rice in, and they control the southern supply, and rice has fallen into the hands of this combine of the packers of New York, and the same with a whole lot of other cereals and vegetables. As far as I can gather the packers of Chicago even control a number of the large hotels in New York, and their combines threaten to become even greater. So great do they threaten to become that at last the

[Mr. W. F. Maclean.]

United States Government has risen to a realization of its duty. It is going after these combines of all kinds, and is going after these high prices, and is trying to bring relief to the people of the Republic who are suffering from high prices just as we are suffering. But the United States is doing it by federal law, federal money, and federal officials in federal courts, and it is not passing the buck to the state government or to the private prosecutor. How can any private prosecutor in this country, how can any farmers' association even, let alone a single farmer, get after the combinations in trade, get after the combines? We have had a combine law on our statute-book for years and years. Hon. gentlemen opposite, when they were in power, went after the combines, but they never touched the root of the matter. As I state here to-day and as I tell the housekeepers of Canada who are complaining of these enormous charges, these high charges: You will never get relief until this is made a federal issue and brought into federal politics. We must do that now in the same way that they have done it in the United States. So that it won't do for hon. gentlemen to go home to their constituencies and say: "We have done something, we have passed this kind of law." But you have not tackled the real question, you have not gone to the root of the matter; and I challenge my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition and his followers, just as I challenge the Government, to say if they ever hope to regulate the high cost of living and to bring relief to the people, as against the combines, as against the high prices, unless they make it a federal issue. We have got to make it a federal issue, and the people in Toronto and in Ontario are getting to see that. A request was made by our Board of Commerce the other day on the Government of Ontario to assist them in bringing some relief. They are admitting the situation, but they have not got the power, the real power; they have not got the means, they have not got the officials, and, consequently are not getting any results from this law so far. I believe a beginning has been made, and I give the Board of Commerce every credit for dealing the other day with sugar. They are going to deal with some other matters, and one of the commissioners is holding court in Toronto; but I want to tell this House and I want to tell the Board of Commerce that I think they will be hamstrung in no time because they have not got sufficient law, and it is largely a farce in this country. If our people