

3-4 GEORGE V., A. 1913

A. Our cost of production is, of course, very much higher than what it costs to produce the American stuff. We pay much higher for our labour than our American competitor does.

*By Hon. Mr. Burrell:*

Q. What do you reckon to be the difference in cost of production?

A. The difference in the cost of production of apples is, roughly speaking, per box, met by the duty.

*By Mr. Schaffner:*

Q. The cost of labour across the line would not be very much lower than it is with you?

A. Oh, yes, it is.

Q. In the Western States?

A. Oh yes, there is no labour in that part of the continent at all that is as high as the labour in British Columbia.

*By Mr. Douglas:*

Q. What is the comparative value of land in the United States and British Columbia?

A. I could not tell you. But owing to this year's crop the value of land in the United States, in districts like Washington, has dropped very considerably because the return to the grower has been in many cases so small that they are really in a bad way over there as well as we are in British Columbia.

Q. What is land worth in British Columbia?

A. It depends upon the age of the orchard, the locality, district, &c.

Q. Take your very best land?

A. Planted or unplanted?

Q. Take planted?

A. Well, I will give you a figure that I know of recently, and this is supposed to be a cheap sale: It was an eight year old orchard of ten acres and sold at \$1000 an acre. Now two years ago, not immediately joining but near it, an orchard sold at \$950. It depends upon the locality and district.

Q. What would they ask for land without fruit trees on it?

A. It depends upon the irrigation system and so on, say from \$250 up to \$500.

Q. Do you not think that is very high for land of that kind?

A. Don't I think it exorbitant?

Q. Yes?

A. Well, if you ask my opinion, I think the price of land has always been too high in the Northwest, but it was not too high according to the figures published and given to the public as to the return that could be obtained from it, the prices, &c.

Q. What were the returns that were published?

A. Well, two years ago our average return to the box was somewhere in the vicinity of \$1.35 to \$1.50. Our average this year will be under \$1, and with regard to peaches and plums and stuff of that sort in many cases there was no return at all that will meet the cost of spraying the trees or pay for the picking and packing. That is the direct result of the slaughtering of our markets by the Americans.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. What does it cost to pick and pack a box of apples?

A. We separate them, the charge for packing a box by the Fruit Union is 34 cents.

Q. For packing alone?

A. That is packing and handling, and materials.

Q. And picking?