

poses to inquire, by royal commission, into the alleged combine which exists on the Great Lakes; and I am glad to observe, also, that they are going to investigate the matter of insurance charges in connection with the shipping of grain. It has been a matter of common knowledge for many months past—in fact, I doubt not that it has been commonly known for years now—that some sort of effort is being and has been made to mulct the producers of western Canada in the matter of transportation rates and insurance charges upon cargoes carried on the Great Lakes. It has always occurred to me as a peculiar thing and one which, I admit, I cannot understand, why it is that season after season, this season like the rest, there is a constant discrimination against Georgian bay ports. I find that uniformly through the past season the rate per bushel on grain from Duluth on lake Superior to Buffalo varied between about two cents and, at the close of the season, five cents. But you take grain rates from Fort William to bay ports, competing points at both ends with American ports and you find that the rate during this season, and in prior seasons too, has varied from 3½ cents to as high, I understand, as ten cents per bushel. I cannot understand the reason for this discrimination, and I hope that in this connection the inquiry by the royal commission will be as thorough as possible. I trust that no effort will be spared to bring to bay any combine which may exist in regard to these matters.

I hope that the government, in their zeal to discover whether there is a combine on the lakes in the matter of transportation rates, will not fail to carry their investigation to the point where they can be assured whether or not there is any combine in connection with ocean rates; because, after all, these combines, if they do exist, are usually hydra-headed. You may cut off one head, but the others remain; and the government should see to it that the investigation shall be such that it may not be said afterwards that, while a combine has been robbed of its power in one section, nevertheless it can rise up in might in another. In connection with this inquiry I regret that the government did not long ago take some drastic action in dealing with the situation. I cannot see why the coastal laws of the country were suspended, practically at the close of navigation, when such suspension could do little good so far as grain transportation costs were concerned. The government might well have acted far more diligently in that regard.

There is another way in which the government can be of some service: I refer to an investigation of the possibilities of the westward movement of grain through the port of Vancouver. If that investigation justifies it, their support should be given in connection with the so-called western grain route. I know there are problems involved in connection with the shipping of grain from the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan westward through the port of Vancouver. Some of these problems should be mastered by this government; others should be taken up and solved by the people of Vancouver and of British Columbia generally. This is the more necessary in view of the fact, as revealed upon examination, that this westward movement of grain is becoming a far more popular movement than heretofore. I understand that the amount of grain shipped this year through this route is considerably in excess of that shipped last year, despite inadequate terminal and elevator facilities. Account must also be taken of the fact that uniformly through the past season there has been a premium on the Vancouver price over the Fort William price of grain, extending from approximately three cents to between seven and eight cents per bushel. These are matters that should be carefully investigated by the government. I see no reason why the Board of Grain Commissioners should not long ago have been charged with the duty of investigating this matter with a view to ascertaining the feasibility of developing this western movement of grain. Is there anything the people of British Columbia can do to make it more feasible? That an investigation should disclose. In the years to come, in my opinion, this matter will be of increasing importance to this country, and I trust that the government will not neglect any opportunity to give, at least, what counsel and support they can to the western movement of grain.

Now, I have dealt to some extent with the matter of grain growing in western Canada. I propose to turn my attention for a moment to the cattle industry of western Canada. This industry, as everyone must realize, is one for which the province of Alberta particularly is naturally adapted. In past years it has been a very profitable and a very large industry. But unfortunately the high American tariff has excluded our cattle from the Chicago market, and the result has been a disastrous fall in prices, the sacrifice of cattle at very low rates that are utterly unprofitable and, most unfortunate of all, the sale of a large