

seat. They gathered in millions in 1922 and millions more in 1923, and then alarm reached even the heart of the government and the Minister of Trade and Commerce. He hurried to the United States, fell at the feet of the American vessel owners, begged them to come back and rescue Canada from the plight into which she had fallen under the blow of their own legislation, begged them to come back and defy the law of this country, a law which this parliament had passed at this government's request. The Americans exacted their terms. They said, "Before we go back we must be indemnified against all breach of the Canadian law. You may say that we may hold the law in contempt, but there are other people in Canada besides you, and we want to be protected so as to be sure that we shall not be prosecuted by citizens of the Dominion, even though the government does cast its own law into the waste paper basket." And the plan evolved was this, that the grain shippers would bind themselves in their charters to indemnify the American vessel owner against breach of the law of Canada. And the Grain Commission, on the instructions of this government, said in effect to the American vessel owners. "You do not need to obey that law. Although, the law compels you to file a schedule, to file your charter, to file your tariff of rates,—you do not need to comply. It will be all right if the shipper instead just files his charter with a statement of the space consumed." And then the shipper entered into a contract to indemnify the American vessel owner for acceding to the appeal of the Canadian government to violate Canadian laws. The grain shippers, in their turn, evidently looked again to this administration. "What security are we to have," they said, "if we enter into this indemnity bond, this charter obligation with the United States vessel owner?" And the government came to the rescue once more. The government commission got behind these shippers and promised to stay behind them and justified them in this complicity in a breach of the law that this government had passed. Such is the ludicrous perambulation by which this government busied itself through the summer in nullifying the baneful effect of its legislation of the winter.

Now, we come to some other efforts of the administration. We had a Combines Investigation bill last session. The nation was suffering from a glut of monopolies. Malefactors were abroad in the land. Had not the Minister of Labour himself recognized them when he was a member of the Board of Com-

[Mr. Meighen.]

merce? He had seen them; he had chased them; he had tried to bring them to book, but he could not do so; he had only a wooden gun. Particularly he saw in front of him that awful Dominion Textile Company, and his heart burned with rage and with a passion to get after the monster. He saw as well the British Empire Steel Corporation; and in order to picture it in black colours, he declared and falsely declared, that it was the incorporation of the late government when he knew it was the incorporation of a Liberal government in Nova Scotia. All these malefactors he wanted the power to reach and to make do justice to the Canadian people, especially to those "masses" for whom his heart was bleeding. Those "masses" had to be taken care of against the excess and extortion of great monopolies eating at their vitals. So the Combines Investigation Act was passed—an act, by the way which did not provide power to prosecute anybody; an act which provided power to investigate, and after one circle of investigation was completed, to go around the circle again. After this exercise they could apply to the minister to go around the investigating circle once more, and after they got round it to their full satisfaction they landed just where they had begun. This, in summary, was the result of the legislation. The Minister of Labour was, appropriately enough, put in charge. He was placed on the seat, given the lines and the whip; and he was told—now you have a gun. How many hon. gentlemen have heard of any prosecution under that law? How many have heard of any investigation? I have not heard of any. If there have been any I would like the details to be presented for the delectation of parliament. All that I have heard was a pronouncement from the Minister of Labour after three or four months of operation in which he declared to a delighted nation that he had searched the country from coast to coast and could find not one combine or malefactor. Like Bolingbroke in the absence of Richard II, they had revelled in the night whilst he was wandering in the antipodes but as soon as the sun of royalty rose they stood bare and naked trembling at their sin. So fled the combines and malefactors before the majesty of the sword in the hands of the Minister of Labour—this is really what the people of Canada are asked to believe.

I do not know that these escapades comprise all the efforts of the government, but they are the main ones. If there are any others for which the administration would like to take credit, I would be glad of a suggestion. What single effort of this administration has resulted