

We found, as I said, that in those years we were facing absolute ruin, and the only thing that could save us was relief from this Parliament. We came here with deputations; we presented the case to the government then in office, of which Sir Robert Borden was the head, and we backed up our plea by statistics of so convincing a nature that the Government, in spite of a good deal of determined opposition from the other side of the House, gave us the relief that we sought in the form of an increase in the duty on apples to 30 cents a box. A box contains about forty pounds; there are about three boxes to a barrel. From that moment the industry began to flourish; people took new heart, and from British Columbia there will be exported this year some 6,000 cars of apples valued at between \$8,000,000 and \$9,000,000. Is that not an industry that is worth conserving? You gentlemen from the prairies are very enthusiastic supporters of the principle of co-operation, and rightly so. Now, we have built up in the Okanagan and other apple-producing valleys of British Columbia a splendid system of co-operation in the handling and marketing of our fruit. If you want to deliver it a deadly blow; if you want to bring co-operation in that country to its knees—indeed, to extinction—you cannot do it more effectively than by taking off this protection from our fruit.

Mr. VIEN: Will the hon. member permit me a question? What is the duty on Canadian apples entering the United States?

Mr. MacKELVIE: It is just about the same, since the Fordney Bill came into effect, as our own duty.

Mr. VIEN: But what was the duty prior to that?

Mr. MacKELVIE: Prior to that apples were free.

Mr. VIEN: Well then in so far as the argument of my hon. friend goes, what was to prevent him or the apple growers from shipping apples to the United States and competing with the American fruit growers.

Mr. MacKELVIE: The reason that prevented us from taking advantage of a situation of that kind—which by the way never existed—was just the same reason that prevents our manufacturers of goods in Canada from competing against highly specialized firms in the United States they can turn out their products in such vast quantities that their overhead expenses are

[Mr. MacKELVIE.]

very low compared to ours; they can afford to sell their products—I know your point—I will come to it in a minute—very much cheaper than we can. But the real reason was this: they produce a hundred times more apples in those two states to the south of us than we produce in British Columbia, and their market is crowded with their home products, for that reason they seek to dump their surplus product in our natural markets on the prairies.

Mr. VIEN: But their market was just as open to you.

Mr. MacKELVIE: Providing there was a market there; but there was no market; they were overstocked; they themselves had overproduced.

Mr. VIEN: Will my hon. friend allow me a further question?

Mr. MacKELVIE: Yes.

Mr. VIEN: I would ask him why the British Columbia fruit growers went into such an unprofitable business?

Mr. MacKELVIE: Oh. Well, I think I can possibly explain that too.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacKELVIE: At the time we entered largely upon the commercial production of apples in British Columbia the prospect did seem to be a pretty alluring one. We had not then perhaps, taken into consideration the fact that there were very much larger areas of land suitable for the cultivation of orchards in the states to the south of us. We had not, perhaps, been fully seized of the fact that already the existing orchards there far outnumbered our own, but the principal reason was this: at that time there was pouring into the plains, into the three provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, immigrants from the United States at the rate of at least a couple of hundred thousand a year and it looked to us who were planting orchards there that by the time our orchards came into full production, by the time they came to maturity, the natural increase of the population of the Prairie provinces would be such—and we hoped too their prosperity would grow in the same measure as their immigration—that we would have provided for us just over the mountains that lie to our east a vast market that would absorb all that we could offer it.

Mr. VIEN: Providing it was protected by a high tariff wall.