

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

COMMITTEE ROOM No. 105,

TUESDAY, February 25, 1913.

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization met here at 11 o'clock, the Chairman, Mr. Sexsmith, presiding.

The CHAIRMAN.—The time has arrived for us to commence our meeting. We have with us this morning Mr. W. S. Foggo, of the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association. No doubt he will be in a position to give you valuable information in connection with the fruit industry in the West. I will now call upon Mr. Foggo to address you.

Mr. Foggo.—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen: As representing the fruit growers of British Columbia, and as representing the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association, I want, in the first place, to thank you for inviting a representative of this industry here. We take it that this invitation is a sign of very real interest on the part of the Federal authorities in the industry in British Columbia, and we take it also that it is an augury that something practical is going to be done to relieve a situation that bears too heavily on the British Columbia fruit grower, and looks like becoming, if something is not done, a situation that will be impossible. Gentlemen, we have in our Province in this industry at the present time all the elements of a crisis. Some of us are doing the best we can to prevent the fusion of these elements, but unless we get substantial outside help, unless we get assistance, British Columbia fruit growing is in a very parlous state. I want to go over our conditions in the broadest way, in the most general way I can, and I am sure that if I can be half as convincing as the necessity of our case admits, you, gentlemen, will be convinced of the necessity of doing something for us.

Fruit growing in British Columbia eight years ago was practically non-existent; it was a small thing of no real importance, and not on a business basis. The great bulk of the planting of orchards that took place in the province began eight years ago, and has been continued to a very considerable extent ever since. The laying out of these orchards and the investment of money by outside people who came into the province was the result of direct representations made to proposing settlers and to the public generally by the government of British Columbia and by the government of Canada. These representations were sent broadcast to the public, and, on the whole, matters were presented fairly and there was not undue exaggeration. What the provincial government said, and what the Dominion government officially approved of was this: if people came into the province—my province now—and embarked on the industry of fruit growing and invested their capital there, the climatic and soil conditions were such as tended to the establishment of a fruit growing industry of the best sort; and the government said to these settlers: 'Come into the province and invest your money. You can grow fruit of the quantity and quality that is required, and you will have markets for that fruit. There are already markets, and there will continue to be markets at your own door that will absorb your entire output.' Now, gentlemen, the industry in British Columbia, and the planting in that province, would never have been begun and would really never have grown to the extent that it has had it not been for the representation contained in these pamphlets and bulletins. To give you some figures, if I may, as to the rate at which the industry has grown in respect of production within recent years, I might say that at present from a conservative estimate there has been invested in British Columbia—that is laid down in