

granted by the previous government, and I am also well aware that they are not in existence to-day, that as soon as the present company and others were in a position to get along without the bounties they automatically ceased.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Will the hon. member not tell some of the results that came from those bounties, though?

Mr. HUMPHREY: I have not the facts at hand to go into all the results. I do not know whether there are any particular results that can be shown to-day. At the time the lead and zinc bounties were in effect I am quite willing to admit that there were good results obtained.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There are yet.

Mr. HUMPHREY: To some extent that has passed. There are no lead and zinc bounties in existence in the province to-day. I am quite willing to concede that they were the means of establishing the lead and zinc industry upon a substantial and sound footing. For example, in 1924 this particular institution sold lead and zinc products to the value of nearly \$15,000,000. But the point I would emphasize particularly is that conditions in the mining industry are getting better each year. If this improvement has been brought about in any way by legislation, I am quite willing to concede the fact. May I quote from the annual report of the company published some few days ago? This extract is interesting:

After taking care of current development, depreciation of plant, depletion of property, and paying interest on bank loans, the net profits were \$4,341,014.30, as compared with \$2,401,346.71 in 1923, \$1,467,528 in 1922, and \$570,043 in 1921.

I need scarcely assure the House that this comparison makes it abundantly clear that the industry is not going out of business. I am confident that the mining industry as a whole is improving, and this perhaps contradicts some of the statements of our hon. friends to the right that our industries are going out of business. At any rate the mining industry is not going out of business in British Columbia, and practically every business is improving to some extent.

Mr. McQUARRIE: Does the hon. member refer to the poultry industry?

Mr. HUMPHREY: I am not so much concerned about the poultry industry going out of business. I am aware that certain representations have been made to the government and to hon. members respecting this industry, based on pretty much the same grounds as

[Mr. Humphrey.]

representations regarding the development of Vancouver. I do not know that I am in a position to go so far with the poultry industry as with some of the other industries. Practically every question interjected in the course of this debate hinges upon protection or free trade; when a question comes from our friends to the right it is based on protection, and therefore I am not so much concerned as I have not considered protection to be a paramount issue of the day.

Following up my remarks regarding conditions in British Columbia, while I hesitate to go beyond my own constituency,—for I feel that the representatives of other ridings in my province are more competent to speak for conditions in their districts,—yet I crave the indulgence of any of my hon. friends in referring to one particular question, I mean the reimbursement of the Home Bank depositors. The city of Fernie suffered severely, the losses of Home Bank depositors exceeding \$800,000. Notwithstanding the protracted strike among the miners, and in the face of this heavy loss, the town and district of Fernie, I am informed, is now entering upon a period of better conditions. So far as my information goes the mining industry was never in better shape than it is to-day. But I am given to understand that practically every citizen was directly affected by the Home Bank failure. As I say, there are other members who are perhaps better posted on local conditions, but living in a district adjoining Fernie, and having many close associations with the locality, I feel that I would be shirking my duty if I did not press upon the government the urgent need of legislation to reimburse these depositors. Legislation to this end would help to restore confidence, which is so important not only to the people in the Fernie district but also to those in other districts.

Further substantiating my remarks regarding conditions in my province, particularly in my own district, I may say that 1924 proved the best year for the small-fruit growers that they have enjoyed for a long time. Better returns were obtained from the sale of their fruit, and as the fruit grower is in an improved financial position he has a feeling of renewed confidence which cannot but be helpful. The inquiry into combines with respect to the marketing of fruit, which took place last year, has had a good effect, and we can only hope that the government will follow up the investigation, benefiting, as it does, the fruit growers of British Columbia. The investigation disclosed startling conditions, and I trust the government will enforce any legis-