

or the flour millers here must be philanthropists of a very high order, who, out of sympathy with our already overtaxed British brethren, adopt this delicate method of assisting them to bear their onerous burdens, in sustaining the vast fabric of empire, at a juncture which calls for the support of the overseas dominions. If such be the case, Canadians might grin and bear it, although that would have little effect in filling a void in the stomach.

There is, however, another aspect of the case to which no doubt the commission will give its attention, although it is obvious in this one particular that the finger can be put upon a contributory cause of the high cost of living, which has become so acute in our centres of industry, as to alarm the mass of the workers. I allude to the earning of the milling companies, as can be seen from the published reports of their annual meetings. Many people will be surprised to learn that companies like the Lake of the Woods, Ogilvies and others have been earning 30 per cent on the preferred stock and from 14 to 18 per cent on the ordinary stock, while no less than 60 per cent was earned on the common stock of the International Milling Company, which made last year \$500,000, or ten times the amount of its bonded interest. These are interesting considerations, especially if they be taken in relation to the watered stock which marks the formation, operation and financial procedures.

After all, the millers may not be such philanthropists as we imagine, but we hope that the commission will be able to find out some, at least, of the causes contributing to this very peculiar condition of affairs.

Now, hon. gentlemen, we can form some idea as to why it is reported that the farm population is opposed to the removal of the duties on American wheat and flour.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Does that article refer to the grade or quality of the flour that is sold cheaper in London?

Hon. Mr. POWER—Yes, the different grades are given.

Hon. Sir GEORGE ROSS (Middlesex): It is true of everything else. Everything is cheaper.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I notice the hon. gentleman made some reference to the German tariff. I read in the newspapers that, owing to the high cost of living in Germany, it is proposed to cut down the duty on food products.

The hon. gentleman made some reference to the way in which the Senate treated the Bill for the acquisition of branch lines for the Intercolonial railway, but I do not think it is worth while fighting the battles of last session over again. I think the Senate did the right thing in that case, and further, I believe the Minister of Railways agreed with the Senate in that matter.

Hon. Mr. POWER.

There is just one other paragraph to which I propose briefly to refer, paragraph 11, which reads as follows:

In connection with the highly important subject of transportation of our products, the provision of adequate terminal facilities at our great national ports has received and is receiving the attention of my advisers.

What I was going to say is not said, I assure hon. gentlemen, from any partisan standpoint. I think that we should try to conduct the business of the country as a private business would be conducted. You cannot do it altogether, but still I think we should try to get as near as possible to the businesslike way of doing things. It will be remembered that some two or three years ago—I think it was before the present Government came in—a contract was made with Vickers Sons and Maxim for the construction of a dry dock to be used in the port of Montreal. Now, any business man would not dream of such an undertaking as that. There are three places, three districts, where dry docks may be necessary. Although not absolutely necessary, still it would be desirable to have a dry dock somewhere about the mouth of the St. Lawrence river so that steamships disabled in the gulf could resort to it and could be refitted there. Then there ought to be a dry dock on the Atlantic coast, so that lame ducks could drop in and have their wounds dressed. And there ought to be, I think also, a dry dock on the Pacific. I understand the Government are themselves about to construct a dry dock in British Columbia; but I understand that, although this dry dock in Montreal has been in operation, or at least fit for operation, for the transaction of business for several months, it has never had a ship in it.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—It has had a ship in it, but it never had any repairs made to it.

Hon. Mr. POWER—If there was one ship in it that is about all. Of course advice coming from this side of the House is not welcome by the hon. leader.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Oh yes.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I think the sensible thing to do would be to tow the dock down to Quebec and utilize it there. There may be some use for it there. The present Government are not particularly responsible for the dry dock at Montreal, but they have begun the construction of a dry dock at St. John, N.B., and St. John is to a certain ex-