

see myself, that is unnecessary and an impossibility. In this opinion I concur with our market commissioners. Let me say, however, that as I am personally advised, these jobbers have done fairly decently by the British Columbia fruit grower. The jobbers are certainly in a position to squeeze the fruit grower if they want to, but I do not think they have done so. The demoralized condition of the market has been brought about not altogether by the jobber himself, but by the system and the methods under which the American stuff has come into our market. You cannot go to any buyer of fruit under present conditions and make a sale with him before he wants the stuff; it would not be safe for him to do so. In the prairies the combine, or ring, or whatever you choose to call it for the sake of description, would prefer, if it could, to place its orders and fix the business before it came to handle the stuff, and furthermore would prefer to handle Canadian stuff alone. But, gentlemen, the jobbers could not do that and remain in business for this reason: Suppose they come to me and buy ten, twenty or fifty cars of fruit at fixed prices for delivery on a certain date. Now, when any one of those cars came on to their tracks, they might have, right on those very same tracks, double that amount of fruit consigned from the other side. If those particular jobbers did not handle it other persons would, and would handle it for immediate profit and throw it on the market. Now, no concern could go ahead and buy fruit beforehand when such conditions prevail. The jobber cannot even wire to me to ship a car at a certain fixed price, because before that car could enter his warehouse he may have other cars of exactly the same variety dumped into that warehouse on consignment, and he may have to sell it, and may have to sell, because of the glutted market, at less than he had undertaken to take my car for. That is the condition of affairs, and it has tended to make the position of the jobbers almost impregnable because they are well organized and they know that they can always get all the fruit they want, and when there is more fruit than they want, it is just a question of distributing that fruit at whatever prices they can get.

*By Hon. Mr. Burrell.*

Q. What do you know about this jobbing system?

A. All I know about it is this: I understand that these concerns in the different cities all stand on their own feet, they are all organized as separate entities, but the stockholders in the one are probably stockholders in the other, and the management, to a certain extent at all events, is controlled from the headquarters.

*By Mr. Schaffner:*

Q. You are now speaking about the system of jobbing in the American cities?

A. No, sir, I am talking about the Canadian jobbers who handle this fruit in the Northwest provinces.

*By Mr. Douglas:*

Q. Are there not different firms in Vancouver?

A. There may be, but that is only one city. In the Northwest this ring is well organized and is working together in a general way and covering the whole country.

Q. What struck me as very peculiar is that I was in Vancouver this year and saw no British Columbia fruit shown by the wholesale houses. It was altogether Walla Walla or Washington fruit.

A. I am not, perhaps, as familiar as I should be with all the conditions in British Columbia, but my understanding as to that is that there is a certain wave, a certain movement in Vancouver just now, that is going to be beneficial to the Canadian producer. But the man who has been handling the fruit, the jobber or the retailer, has to a certain extent been influenced by the fact that he could get his supply of fruit quicker, readier, and without having to make provision beforehand from the American than from the Canadian market, because they assemble a certain quantity of