

These milling companies are thus provided with an assured outlet for a large portion of their products and consequently should be able to reduce considerably their sales cost. Here is a paragraph I would like to direct to the serious attention of the government. It reads:

One decided advantage to the mills is that there is no competition for this business, price competition, or any other kind.

This gives to these companies a virtual monopoly of flour, the gravest kind of monopoly, affecting as it does the very life of the masses.

I should like to make a comparison between the prices of wheat and flour in Canada and in Australia. I quote the Australian prices because that country has a fairly high standard of living. The ruling selling price of wheat f.o.b. steamer at principal Australian ports was 61 cents for the month of December, 1930; the price of flour f.o.b. steamer at Australian ports per 2,000 pounds was \$27.37, which is equivalent to about 1.4 cents per pound of flour. Canadian prices for the same period were: December wheat, fifty-six cents per bushel; December flour, \$4.76 per ninety-pound sack, or 2.4 cents per pound of flour. Not only was Australian wheat quoted for sale at five cents a bushel more, but the price of flour offered at Australian ports was sixty-four cents for a forty-nine pound sack as against \$1.19 wholesale price in Canada. It is high time that the government should investigate the price of flour in this country and, if necessary, should break up this combine of millers who, I claim, are exploiting the people of Canada to-day in one of the most essential items of our food, namely, flour. To paraphrase the words of Thomas Hood who many years ago wrote a poem entitled *The Song of the Shirt*:

O God! that bread should be so dear,  
And men and wheat so cheap.

On behalf of the lower mainland of British Columbia an investigation was asked of the Minister of Labour into the prices of all wheat products. The price of bread was secondary. One of the objects in view was the giving of some protection to the independent bakeries and to all other purchasers of flour. The situation is such as to warrant continued government action, the more so in view of a statement I noticed in the Vancouver Province of the tenth of March last to the effect that the four milling companies are about to amalgamate into one large concern.

Mr. E. J. YOUNG (Weyburn): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) is not in his seat, because recently he made some remarks which were directed to me personally, and I wish he were present so that I might direct my observations to him personally. The other day, speaking from his place in the house, he said that I had been going around the Estevan district with a pair of white stockings in my pocket. I know he obtained the information from his bosom friend, Doctor Anderson, Premier of Saskatchewan, but the information is not, strictly speaking, accurate. I was not carrying stockings, but for the information of the house and in order to set people's minds right, I will tell the house exactly what happened. It will be recalled that at the special session last fall, the government of which the right hon. gentleman is the head enormously increased duties on many commodities, amongst which were socks, and they did this in such a way that the heaviest burden would fall upon the poor man. Before leaving Ottawa I secured three pairs of socks which I took out to the west to illustrate to the people exactly what the government had done. I had a pair of workmen's cheap cotton socks, the cheapest I could buy, such a sock as the unemployed would wear—and remember, Mr. Speaker, that this special session was called for the relief of unemployment. I have those socks yet.

Mr. CASGRAIN: Produce them.

Mr. YOUNG: I have them in my hand. I showed these socks to the people of the Estevan district and I explained that under Liberal rule the duty on these socks was 30 per cent, but that under the present Prime Minister the duty was increased at one stroke to 165 per cent of the value of the article. I had also a pair of cheap children's socks, such as the poor man would buy for his child. I have them in my hand. I showed these socks to the people and I explained that under Liberal rule the duty on these socks was 30 per cent, but that under the present administration the duty was increased at one stroke to 185 per cent of the value of the socks. I had still another pair of socks; they were not cheap socks, they were beautiful socks.

An hon. MEMBER: Where are they?

Mr. YOUNG: They are in my pocket. They are socks such as the Prime Minister himself or his wealthy Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Ryckman) would wear, that