

sumed that Sir Richard was speaking for himself. Hon. Mr. Fielding, according to the report, held out little encouragement to the deputation of any Governmental action along the lines suggested.

"What the deputation asked for particularly was the appointment of a special officer whose duty it would be to investigate immediately, under the direction of the Customs Department, all cases where there is reason to believe that the tariff is used for the purpose of facilitating trade combinations. It is charged that combinations for the artificial boosting of prices are flourishing in this country at an extraordinary rate. Under existing provisions relief may be found in two ways—by an appeal to the Criminal Code or by a reduction of the tariff. But experience shows that relief seldom is furnished in either way, for the reason, we suppose, that what is everybody's business is nobody's. What the deputation asked was that the protection of the public should be made somebody's business. The Canadian publishers secured relief under the combines clauses in the matter of paper prices; but it cost the publishers \$1,700 to set the machinery of the law in motion. Clearly a piece of protective machinery that is so hard to move is of little use for the public generally, for, notoriously, the interests of the general public are nobody's concern.

"It is pointed out that when other interests more clearly defined than those of the general public are concerned the machinery works much more freely. For instance, if a man is suspected of some design to furnish the general public with cheap goods of any kind, all that is necessary is to communicate a suspicion to a Customs officer, and the machinery is put in motion at once. The deputation asked that the principle of protection should be applied more generally; that the machinery supplied by the government should be available not merely for the protection of certain classes from the horrible calamity of undervalued goods, but for the protection of the general and consuming public from the oppression of trade combinations for the artificial maintenance of prices.

"But Hon. Mr. Fielding could hold out little encouragement, and the best advice Sir Richard Cartwright could give was that a campaign of education should be begun, looking towards a revenue tariff. It would not be surprising if Sir Richard's advice were accepted."

INCREASING SUSPICION

An outstanding feature of the operation of the elevator system is the advantage it takes of the prejudices that exist in the public mind against the grading system of Manitoba grain to cover up some of the vicious practices that seem inherent to the combination that now obtains in the Western grain trade.

After having due regard to the limitations of human nature and the consequent liability to errors and mistakes in the large volume of grain traffic in a season, some things occur that it is difficult to explain satisfactorily. Yet in the face of that fact the elevator owners not only do not endeavor to allay the unrest and suspicion that affects the minds of farmers, but to cover up the pernicious practices they are accused of habitually indulging in, intensify that suspicion by blaming the inspector for everything that goes wrong. The result is that farmers having been told so much about the "iniquitous inspection system," frequently accept that explanation and the real culprit escapes detection.

Sometimes, however, the true inwardness of the situation gets exposed. A farmer in Western Manitoba recently had a car of wheat loaded over the platform and had it billed to the Grain Growers' Grain Co. Before the car was moved out, the operator of one of the elevators made him a tempting offer, being nearly equal to the value of 1 Northern on track. Suspecting that his wheat would

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not grade nearly that high he accepted the offer and changed the destination of his car.

When he received settlement his account sales showed 3 Northern grade, 6 per cent. dockage. "DUE OF COURSE TO THE INSPECTOR." Not content with that explanation, he sent his documents to the Secretary of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, who, on application for a duplicate certificate found that the proper dockage on the car was $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. instead of 6 per cent. as in the account sales, making a difference of 46 bushels, or an average of \$40.00 on the car of wheat. Which amount the elevator people had to disgorge to the farmer through the intervention of the Warehouse Commissioner.

Many of the buyers have instructions to stick at nothing to prevent grain going to the Grain Growers' Grain Co. The above is an illustration of some of the methods employed, and shippers of grain in car lots, when they receive tempting offers, should take good care that their cars are consigned to their own order and advised so as to get the certificates of weights and grades and not trust to the honesty of the buyer for a statement as to what is contained in these documents.

Another instruction given to buyers by the large milling and elevator firms is in the case of a farmer having a balance left after shipping one or more cars to the Farmers' Company, to offer him one, or even two grades higher for what he has left, the avowed purpose being to sicken him of shipping to the Grain Growers' Grain Co.

The scheme serves the double purpose of prejudicing the farmers against the Grain Co. and at the same time throwing discredit on the Inspection Department.

Magistrate—"What happened between yourself and complainant?"

O'Brien—"I think, sor, half a dozen bricks an' a lump o' pavin' stone!"