

firm was suffering, and I lost no time in making inquiry about it. I at once communicated with the president of the Cement Company. I met his general manager the next day in Toronto, and I said: 'It looks like a cement famine in the West; what have you to say?' He had frankly to admit that they were unable to meet the cement requirements in the West. Now, the Canada Cement Co. manufactures five-sixths of all the cement used in Canada, a fact which the House will require to remember in order to understand the statement I shall make. The manager of the Cement Company admitted, and I made him write me to that effect, that they could not get cars and they could not get boats for the shipment of cement to the West.

Other representations were made, and I commend them to my hon. friend from Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) who is criticising the Government, and my hon. friend from Saskatoon (Mr. McCraney), for I would like to know where these gentlemen stand on the matter. If their position is that they are not loyal to the West, but loyal to the cement merger, I want to know it. I was the target for a good deal of unjustifiable criticism last session, in connection with mergers and combines, and I should like to know where these gentlemen opposite stand to-day. I commend to my hon. friend (Mr. McCraney) this communication from the Saskatoon Building Exchange:

Saskatoon, June 5, 1912.

This city completely tied up for some fourteen days past through lack of cement and failure of the Cement Merger to meet our requirements and position seems likely to continue. Immense losses being caused to the contractors, etc. Cement can be obtained in any quantity and at short notice from the United States. This exchange urges upon you and your Government the necessity of removing the duty on cement and respectfully urges you to take the necessary action to suspend the duty.

They wanted all the duty off, and my hon. friend (Mr. Oliver) criticises the Government for taking only half the duty off.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): What is the date of that?

Mr. WHITE: June 5th. Hon. gentlemen opposite may say: Why could they not bring in the cement and pay the duty? I will tell you why. I made a very careful investigation into the subject—I gave this matter as careful consideration as I ever gave anything—and in June last, when this correspondence was exchanged, the price of Canadian cement in the West was from 15 to 30 cents lower than the price of

Mr. WHITE (Leeds).

American cement, plus freight and duty. The contractors in the West had quoted certain rates for paving and for building purposes, and this meant that they would have been obliged to pay the higher rate because they could not get delivery from the cement companies of Eastern Canada. You will observe that the first telegram I had asked me to equalize the price of cement in order that these men could get the cement at the price for which they contracted and be enabled to go ahead at once with their building and street paving operations.

Another one from Saskatoon, from the Board of Trade—my hon. friend from Saskatoon is not here, but my hon. friend the member from Edmonton is the leader of the western contingent.

The Saskatoon Builders Exchange.

Saskatoon, June 6, 1912.

Cement shortage rendered situation here critical. Construction work all kinds suspended owing to lack of supplies. This delay serious blow to general development. Over five million dollars tied up in buildings and enforced idleness of labourers causing heavy loss to contractors and others. Strongly urge temporary remission of duty to enable obtaining cement from United States thus obviating further commercial distress.

Saskatoon Board of Trade,
M. ISBESTER,
President.

Let me ask my hon. friend this: Does he slander the Saskatoon Builders' Exchange, or the Saskatoon Board of Trade by suggesting that they were influenced in sending those telegrams to me by the fact that an election was pending in Saskatchewan? I told my hon. friend (Mr. Oliver) that I would convince him, and I think I have gone far to do it. He cannot stand up and say, and there is no man among hon. gentlemen opposite who can say, there was any collusion in connection with the cement reduction in the West, having reference to the documents I am presenting to the House.

Mr. OLIVER: If that is intended as a challenge, I will be glad to do it.

Mr. WHITE (Leeds): Sometimes when my hon. friend is assailing this Government, I congratulate myself that the table is between him and me, and that the mace is not within too easy reach of my hon. friend.

Mr. OLIVER: If my hon. friend wants my answer, I can give it to him now.

Mr. WHITE (Leeds): Maybe my hon. friend will remember that last year, when interrupted he declared that it was his turn to speak and that he had not finished.