

The Binder Twine Steal.

It seldom happens that a greater outrage has been committed with the sanction and assistance of the Government than the combine that forced up the price of binder twine to the farmers to the point of robbery.

In order to make this perfectly clear, it will be necessary to state briefly the actual transactions as they took place in each year since the Liberal party came into power in 1896. But, before doing so, it would be well to state in the outset that a very thorough examination of this matter has been made from time to time by the Public Accounts Committee, before whom all the original invoices showing the cost of the raw material purchased from year to year for the manufacture of binder twine at the Kingston Penitentiary was produced, so that there can be no possible doubt as to the actual cost of the raw material, to which one cent per pound is added in all cases to cover the cost of manufacture, although the Hon. David Mills states that three quarters of a cent per pound is quite sufficient to cover the cost of manufacture.

When the present Government took office in 1896, they found one million pounds of binder twine on hand at the Kingston Penitentiary which had cost including raw material and manufacture, \$4.66 per hundred pounds, and which they sold in September of the same year after the twine season had closed, at less than cost, to Coll Bros., of St. John, N.B., at \$4.25 per hundred pounds.

COMBINE TO FLEECE THE FARMERS.

In the early part of the year 1897, and in less than six months after the Laurier Government found themselves comfortably seated in office, the combine to fleece the farmers began.

The output of binder twine at the Kingston Penitentiary for the year 1897 amounting to one million pounds, which had cost an average price, including raw material and manufacture of, \$4.43 per hundred pounds, had to be sold, and political friends must get it. One actual tender was put in by the Hobbs Hardware Co. of London, of which Mr. T. S. Hobbs, M.P.P. is the head, and one blind tender unaccompanied by the required deposit was put in by Coll Bros., soap manufacturers of St. John, N.B. This concern were political friends, who had two or three months previously purchased the one million pounds of twine upon which they made a small deposit. The deposit according to their contract had been forfeited by reason of their failure to take delivery and pay for the twine which still remained at the Kingston Penitentiary.

At this stage of the proceedings the Hobbs Hardware Co. and Coll Bros., enter into a partnership for the purpose of manipulating the binder twine business, with the full knowledge and consent of the Government, as shown by the sworn testimony of one of the officials in Mr. Mills' own department and by one of the parties interested in the combine.

HOW THE COMBINE GOT IT.

The representatives of the combine, namely, the Hobbs Hardware Co. and Coll Bros. proceeded at once to Toronto to make a raid on one and a half million pounds of the people's binder twine at the Central prison, which they secured with little difficulty at a very low price. Then, returning to Ottawa, Coll Bros. withdrew their blind tender and the twine was handed over to