

present Government is not responsible, the American market has been opened to our cattle and the farmers of the western provinces have received for their cattle higher prices than they ever received before. The consequence will be that in two or three years there will be more cattle in the western provinces than there have been for many a long year. It is only by the stimulating of the activity of the farmer that he will develop his industry and lead to the whole of this country producing what it ought to produce.

One thing more we should do. At the present time the farming community of the West is suffering from a combine of the shipping interests of the Great Lakes. They have petitioned for a remedy of that grievance. It is a serious grievance, because it involves a tax upon both the producer and the consumer; and the Government will have to deal with that problem whether they wish to do so or not. The law is there to be executed, and if the law is not sufficient it ought to be amended so as to enable the Government to cope with such problems.

The Government must also take into consideration the problem of the high cost of living. I know I shall be told at once that that is not a question that affects Canada alone. I am quite aware that it affects the whole civilized world. The fact that the cost of living has risen in all civilized countries shows that there are causes which are universal and which may perhaps be beyond our control. At the same time, when we reflect that the cost of living has risen in Great Britain ten per cent and in Canada fifty per cent, it is plain that there are causes operating in Canada which do not exist in Great Britain. Now, I wish to state the question clearly; I do not pretend that the increased price of products is a thing in itself to be deplored. One cause for it I state at once: for the last ten or fifteen years the price of labour has increased all over the world; therefore it was natural that the price of agricultural labour should increase also, and this has had the effect of increasing the price of the product. This increase went on for years normally and gradually, and nobody complained. But at the present moment things are different. We see to-day that between the price paid by the consumer and the price received by the producer, there is a wide margin, and it is that margin especially which it should be the effort of this Government and this Parliament to reach and to cut down. If the

price paid by the consumer were the price received by the farmer, no one could seriously object, and no one would object. But we have the right to object when the prices received by the farmer are not those which are paid by the consumer. I have seen it stated many times that the tariff is not responsible for the high cost of living. I do not pretend that the tariff is responsible for the high cost of living in its entirety, but I say to the Minister of Finance (Mr. White), who, more than any one else, must have this matter in hand, that the restrictions imposed by the tariff are used by the combines in order to promote their interests and charge those abnormal prices. And we are told that nothing is to be done. We are told that everything is satisfactory; we are told that the Government is powerless in this matter. It is not for me to give advice to the Government; if I were to offer it they would not take it from me. But I have to tell them, whether they wish it or not, that they must act: they cannot afford to lie idle. They are not free to remain still like logs; they must move. There has been stringency before in this country. We are told in the speech from the Throne that the resources of the country are boundless. So they are. So they have been at all times. So they were in 1893-4-5 and 6. But, though the resources were boundless in that way, yet the people suffered. It was only when a new Government came in that had the courage to take the matter in hand that there came an era of prosperity which terminated only when the present Government came into office.

These are some of the duties which face the Government. Whether they accept what I say or not does not matter. But I tell them frankly—no, I will not tell them, but I tell the country frankly—that if they take up these duties and perform them with courage, with energy and good judgment, the shops will be reopened, trade will revive, prices will reach an equilibrium between consumer and producer, and we shall have another era such as we had after the enactment of the tariff of 1897. But if they will not do so, there are other men who will have to take their places, men who have shown before by actual experience that they have the minds to plan and the courage to execute, men who have proven that when difficulty arose and when the time of stringency came, they were equal to the occasion. This Government may accept it from me or not, but if they do not, the people will have to pronounce between them and us.