

evidence, so that the presence of a lawyer with these two accountants was thought to be a desirable thing. As far as the controversy of last year is concerned, to which my hon. friend last called attention, the contracts in question were not given by Sir Joseph Flavelle, of the Imperial Munitions Board; they were given to the persons whom the hon. gentleman mentioned, long before Sir Joseph Flavelle had anything whatever to do with the giving of contracts for munitions.

Mr. KYTE: What does the hon. gentleman think of the suggestion made by the hon. gentleman from Carleton, that some person be permitted to appear before this commission on behalf of the public?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I have already said to my hon. friend that we will take that suggestion into consideration.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN: I may perhaps be a little out of order in referring to this question. But inasmuch as the question of cold storage is before the committee, and inasmuch as Mr. O'Connor's findings have been under consideration, I want to state what the public opinion of my province is with regard to this question generally. It is this: A food controller has been appointed and an extensive department organized for the purpose of food control, especially in connection with cold storage companies and organizations of that kind. Certain revelations have been made regarding the products handled by some of these cold storage companies. Our organization along the line of food control is somewhat similar to that which they have in Great Britain and in the United States. The people think that we ought to have more action from the food controller and less action on the part of commissions. The result of the revelations that have been made ought to be the immediate control of prices where high charges have been made. The people know that Canadian flour made from Canadian wheat, and bread made from that flour are cheaper in England than in Canada, and that the products of Canadian packing firms are sold at a lower price in the Mother Country than they are sold here. The people want to know why such things can be, especially in view of the fact that we now have a food controller. Our food controller is engaged in a good work. A meeting was held in Toronto last night at which the women were addressed by the food controller upon the subject of thrift. The people do not want a food controller who will wait for a long report before he

[Sir Robert Borden.]

takes action. He may wish to have an initial report on which to act, but he ought to be sufficiently competent to investigate for himself; he ought to have at his services officials who will help him to ascertain whether or not, for instance, the statement made in connection with the price of bacon justifies immediate action on his part. If it be proved that the prices are exorbitant, the food controller, by virtue of the powers that the Government have under the War Measures Act, should take such steps that immediate relief should be brought to the Canadian consumer. They are getting results in England through the regulation of prices. We are gradually getting to that ourselves; some of the commissions having to do with the fixing of the price of wheat in the West are getting down to work, and I have no doubt that good results will be brought about. I think that we have a competent food controller, but what we expect is not investigations by commissions, but the regulation of prices, especially in such cases as are exemplified by the difference between the price of Canadian flour here and the price of the same flour in England. The food controller and his staff ought to be able to show in one week whether the charges for bacon and bread and flour in this country, the ordinary, every-day necessities of life, and all those articles of food that pass through the hands of the cold storage people, are fair and reasonable. If they are not fair and reasonable, then the people ought to get relief. I do not think that the people are satisfied to pay 52 cents a pound for bacon. I met yesterday a man who receives a fair salary, and I had occasion to ask him what he was taking home to his family on Saturday night. He said: I bought one pound of bacon, and I paid 52 cents for it. I was told on the same day that the price of a hog's carcass on the market was about 22 cents a pound. That is a large price, but there is quite a difference between 22 cents a pound for fresh pork and 52 cents a pound for bacon. I think that sufficient evidence has been sent broadcast over the country to justify quick action in the way of regulating the price of food. The Government would be wise in getting down to the essential issues concerning prices. What we want is not so much an investigation by one commission of the findings of another, as some definite action, as quick as we can get it. As to what has been disclosed, I do not for one moment reflect upon the packing plants, I am not in a position