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Photographer.

# HON. MACKENZIE KING ON THE SUGAR SITUATION

Liberal Leader Vigorously Assails the Sugar Order Issued by the Board of Commerce—Real Issue Between the Government and the People is Becoming More Clearly Defined—Government Playing Game for the Big Interests.

Vernon, B. C.,—Hon. Mackenzie King and his party arrived in this city late on Thursday afternoon. Mr. King in making his first speech in the riding of Yale, where a bye-election is proceeding, found the majority of eyes turned in his direction.

The Liberal leader made a sensation with his talk on the sugar question with special reference to the order issued on Wednesday, by the Board of Commerce.

"Day by day," said Mr. King, "the real issue between the political parties in Canada as represented on the one hand, by the Government and its supporters and on the other by the progressive forces arrayed against them, is becoming more and more clearly defined. We who are espousing the cause of Liberalism have been saying all along that the issue is between invisible government by the 'Big Interests' on the one hand and government by a parliament representative of the people irrespective of the race or creed and class."

"Thus far the Big Interests have sought to conceal their identity and to have Mr. Meighen and his colleagues who have usurped the right of government in this country, serve special privilege under the guise of a political party calling itself the National Liberal and Conservative Party. It is inevitable however, that sooner or later the identity of some at least of the Big Interests who are controlling the destinies of the country through the government they have created shall become apparent. The identity of one at least of these interests has been disclosed in the order of the Board of Commerce directing that transactions as to the buying and selling of refined sugar shall be limited to channels which find their fountain head in the half dozen refiners who constitute one cast monopoly in this Dominion.

### The Sugar Order

"According to the despatches we read in the press this morning, wholesalers, manufacturers and retailers are restrained from buying sugar except from the few refiners included in this privileged monopoly. Wholesalers are restrained from selling sugar to other than manufacturers and retailers, and manufacturers and retailers are denied the right of buying otherwise than from those wholesalers. In other words the sugar combine in Canada, having through government agency succeeded in forcing the price of sugar up to a point unheard of and never hitherto reached in the level of sugar prices in Canada, has now, through the same agency, succeeded in maintaining that price at a monopoly figure, just at the very moment when conditions of international trade would make it possible for relief to be obtained by consumers everywhere throughout Canada in a manner which would effectively serve to reduce some what the high cost of living. There is only one feature about it from which at least some small measure of satisfaction can be derived. It affords irrefutable evidence of the truth of the assertions which we have been making right along as to the contending forces at work in our political and industrial society. It reveals the issue clearly as between the profiteers and the people—the profiteers, on one hand, protected by a government they helped to create, and the people, on the other, who are in need of protection against these all powerful anti-social forces. It will require a moment's pause on the part of the public to fully appreciate just the extent to which consumers would be left without protection of any kind under the board's order and profiteers permitted to continue the reaping of their rewards at the public expense.

"In 1919 there were enacted what is known as the Combines and Fair Prices Act and the Board of Commerce Act. The two were intended as measures to be operated in connection with each other. The Board of Commerce was to be an instrument to apply the provisions of the Combine and Fair prices Act in a manner which would protect consumers from unjust taxation and the evils of profiteering.

### The Murdoch Charges

"The board, however, had not commenced its work before its chairman resigned. A little later the second member of the board, W. F. O'Connor, resigned, and still a few weeks later James Murdoch, the sole remaining member, also resigned. In tendering

his resignation Mr. Murdoch, in a letter to the prime minister, asserted that a majority of the cabinet were not in sympathy with the law, that it had no sooner been passed than members of the government began to minimize its provisions, that they repeatedly undertook to thwart its activities and were using their influence to stifle inquiry into instances of profiteering. Mr. Murdoch stated further that combines had fastened themselves on essential food and had introduced methods to prevent fair competition, and that unfair and excessive profits had been discovered by the board with regard to large numbers of commodities. He referred specifically to sugar.

"When confronted in parliament with Mr. Murdoch's charges the present prime minister, Mr. Arthur Meighen, instead of meeting the demand of the Opposition for a full investigation sought to cast ridicule on the charges and other members of the government subsequently sought to minimize the reliability and standing of Mr. Murdoch himself.

"The order which has now been issued by the board which since Mr. Murdoch's resignation, has ceased to be in any sense of the word an independent board but has become a mere official organ of the government, bears out the truth of all that Mr. Murdoch said.

"The public have not yet become aroused to the circumstances that when the government established the Board of Commerce it at the same time abolished the act passed in 1910 by the Laurier Administration known as the Combines Investigation Act, which was the only piece of legislation on our statutes affording to consumers means of redress against the exactions of combines, monopolies, trusts and mergers.

"The consumer was left without any machinery at all adequate for his protection. On the other hand, machinery purporting to be for the protection of the consumer was, in reality, made into an instrument for the protection of

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profiteers. Having removed from the statutes, the only machinery of investigation which consumers on their own initiative could take advantage of their protection the government has now gone a length which it is almost impossible to believe in protecting not the people but the profiteers in their unwarranted exactions.

### The Sugar Barons

"First let it be remembered that the price to which sugar has risen has enabled individuals to accumulate vast fortunes which have been made at the expense of the consuming public. When the sugar refiners found that contracts into which they had entered with firms in the United States were not going to be as profitable as the sale of sugar in Canada, at the price to which sugar had risen in this country, they went to the government to secure an order which would prohibit the export of sugar in a manner which would secure them in their monopoly. When later the price of sugar began still further to decline in the United States, and the prospect of relief to the consuming public was in sight through possible competition from the United States and other countries, the refiners were not satisfied with the protection which the law affords them, and which according to the customs tariff is \$1.93 per 100 pounds on all re-

finer sugars, but, intent on maintaining the advantages of the monopoly they invoked the power of the government, not to prohibit export as they had been asking some time before but to prohibit imports until their vast accumulated stocks are disposed of at the high prices to which sugar has mounted.

"The action of the board is injurious not only to consumers of sugar but it is also injurious to such industries as the fruit industry. The action of the board is equally injurious to the great transportation and commercial industries in the country, which depend on their returns upon the volume of trade. Not only the carrying trade but the wholesale and retail trade are bound also to be similarly affected by this adverse order, which, by restricting the sale of an important commodity, serves also to restrict the sale of every commodity into which that article enters. \* \* \*

Lima Beane says the worst thing about plastering a mortgage on a house is that it is hard to get off.

Leader Baxter should be grateful to the government forces of Charlotte for lifting his legislative following out of the thirteen hole.

A girl will encourage a young man to stay out late during courtship and then kick because he keeps it up after marriage.

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Travelling salesmen work very hard as a rule. They put in long hours, and the pleasure of travelling is not so great as to those of us who mostly live at home.

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