

war cabinet was neither necessary nor desirable. I shall not refer to that now, but I may do so on a later occasion.

I think we should have from the Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe), a full explanation of the gasoline situation and the gasoline conservation measures which are in effect in Canada. Such a statement is due to the country. I have not been critical of Mr. Cottrelle, but I was astonished to read a full page advertisement of the Joy Oil company not so long ago. The minister has stated that this has been referred to the Department of Justice for a legal opinion as to whether or not it was subversive or libellous. We have heard nothing more from him, and the gasoline situation in Canada needs clarification. I invite the minister to make such a statement. I do not want to seem critical; I simply feel that we ought to know just what the position is.

I wish to say something about price control. I think we all know of the evil which has been brought about by inflation at certain periods of our history. I have never been afraid of a degree of inflation in times of depression. From 1933 on, during a period of depression, our great neighbour to the south used a substantial degree of inflation in order to raise the price levels of commodities. Whether or not that had the desired effect I do not know. One of the things done by the leader of that country was to raise the price of gold, with the result that to-day the gold deposits of the United States are a liability rather than an asset. I think it will be agreed that the NRA failed in the objectives sought to be attained.

I think we all admit that in war time inflation may become a real danger, especially inflation in the prices of the necessities of life. But even in the wildest dreams I ever had I never thought that inflation could be controlled by legislation, or by orders in council, which are equivalent to legislation. The economists will tell you that the old-fashioned method of taking care of inflation was by having more production. What does that mean? Longer hours; more sweat and toil. No matter what the Prime Minister may resort to by way of legislation to prevent inflation, I suggest that the only orthodox method of dealing with inflation is more production, more labour, longer hours, and more sweat. They are sweating in England. Trade unionists over there are working twelve hours a day. They are nearer to the situation and to the scene and that is what they are doing. I suggest to the Prime Minister that unless he has the one hundred per cent cooperation of every producer, every tradesman, and every man

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

interested in the exchange of commodities in Canada, this system cannot succeed. It is a great experiment and I hope it will work out successfully, because I know the dangers of inflation.

I trust that no word of mine to-day will be construed as being a condemnation of the objectives which the Prime Minister seeks; what I have to say is being said against the method and the manner of bringing it into effect. Why was it necessary only a few days before this house reassembled to legislate on such an important economic development by way of order in council? Could we not deal with a question of this kind? Are we so effete, are we so inefficient, are we so blind to our duties as members of the House of Commons, that we cannot be trusted to debate a matter like this before it becomes an accomplished fact?

I suggest to the Prime Minister that this is one more example of his contempt for parliament. I may be alone in holding that opinion, but we have had so many examples in days gone by that I now have a sense of frustration as to the utility of democratic institutions in war time, as practised by this government. What are we fighting for, their preservation, or their domination by regimentation? I wish the Prime Minister would take us into his confidence and tell us whose baby this is. Is it the product of the war-time prices and trade board? I do not think it is. Is it the product of the ministry? Of course the ministry must take the responsibility. Is it not the product of the brain trust with which this government has surrounded itself and which is running the country to-day?

I think the Prime Minister should have brought this matter before parliament in order that we might debate it. If urgency was important we would not retard it. The Prime Minister knows that whenever a war measure has been brought before this house—and this is a quasi war measure—and he has wanted it put through in a hurry, it has been put through. I received the order in council only yesterday afternoon after this house adjourned and I barely had a chance of glancing at it. I doubt if any hon. member has been able to give that order in council the intensive study that is necessary to an understanding of it. We understand its implications, but we do not understand all its ramifications. I suggest, therefore, that this matter should have been brought to the floor of this house where it could have been explained to hon. members. It could have been threshed out and truth would have evolved.