

*The Address—Mr. St. Laurent*

the war. I do not want to be unfair to him, and as I have his exact language here I will quote it. He said, as recorded at page 1734 of *Hansard* of April 9, 1951:

I have sought to make it clear on earlier occasions in this house that much more moderate controls, much more flexible controls would be sufficient to deal with the situation which has arisen...

We see what kind of controls they have endeavoured to enforce, and which the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) says are more effective and harsher than those they used during most of the period of the last war, and we see what the result is. I do not think the Canadian public would be satisfied to have us fix ceilings at the prices I find in the ceilings published in the United States on the 28th of September. I do not think the consuming people of Canada would want their government to be stating that the price it was fair to ask the consumers to pay for porterhouse steak was \$1.34, for tenderloin, or anything of that kind.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Have you comparable figures as to the prices paid to the farmers for the primary products and to labour for wages?

**Mr. St. Laurent:** No.

**Mr. Coldwell:** That makes a difference.

**Mr. St. Laurent:** I am merely comparing what the situation is. I do know that a lot of our producers of beef are selling to the United States market because of the prices they can get there, and that has had the effect of making it necessary for our Canadian slaughterers to pay similar prices or see the animals move across the line. Perhaps I should read a little more of the editorial in the *Gazette* to which I have referred. It has this to say:

Major packers are finding that they cannot make even their established average profit of one per cent or less on turnover, and are beginning to operate at a loss, if they buy live animals at advancing present prices, slaughter and process them, and attempt to sell them within retail price ceilings. One company, Armour, showed a loss of \$1.6 million in its latest quarterly report, a Cleveland firm has shut down rather than go on losing money, and the big Wilson company has cut back its slaughtering plant operations to three weeks a month.

These are things which I am not defending, but which I am merely stating are happening in the face of this situation where a lot of people—I will not say everybody—have quite a lot of money and rather than keep their money are willing to spend a portion of it for certain supplies. That being the situation I do not feel that I can agree with the leader of the opposition when he says that inflation in Canada has outrun inflation in the United States. That does not appear to be so by the actual prices at which commodities are being sold. I have another comparison of prices but I do not want to burden

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

the house with unnecessary figures, as I think I have said enough to indicate that if one investigates that is what he will find.

There is no doubt that prices are high. There is no doubt that certain sectors of our population are feeling some hardship, but not all sectors. In spite of high prices the average wage paid in our manufacturing industries will buy more today than it did before the war. The prices that our farmers are getting for their produce, in spite of the fact that they are paying higher prices for things they have to buy, is giving them a larger share of the national income at this time than ever before. I am not saying that is not as it should be. I notice an hon. member shaking his head but let me say that he is not the only one who knows the farmers in this country. I know farmers in various parts of Canada and I know for a fact that at the present time they are getting a larger share of the national income than they ever got before. I am not saying that they should not. I am not saying that they are getting too much. I know that they work hard for what they get and I feel that the prices they are getting under present price levels are not too high and that it would not be fair to try to roll them back.

**Mr. Wright:** How about that portion of the national income—

**An hon. Member:** Sit down.

**Mr. St. Laurent:** The hon. member will have an opportunity of putting his information before the house. I have had many opportunities to observe what is going on and I am simply stating what has come to my knowledge. I am most happy to testify to the fact that the larger portion of the national income which the farmers are receiving is being used to improve farm lands throughout the country. I know that for a fact. I have seen evidence of it with my own eyes. They are increasing their productivity through the use of the larger portion of the national income they are getting. I think that is all to the good. Ultimately we will be most happy that that has been done. We have an increasing population that will have to be provided for largely by areas already under cultivation. Those areas must be made to produce more or we in this country will not be producing our share of the food requirements of an increasing mankind.

I stated that A & P in Ottawa were selling Chase and Sanborn coffee at 94 cents but I understand it was their own brand that was being sold at that price while Loblaws were selling Chase and Sanborn at \$1.06.