

ence to the fact that wheat is now somewhere around \$3 a bushel on the international market and our floor price is \$1.55. He said, "Sir, you certainly got a floor, not upstairs but away down in the basement." With that I can agree. But our farmers generally are favourable to the idea of orderly marketing at assured prices, and hope and beg that such controls as are necessary to give the producers the prices they require in view of what they must pay for the things they buy may be retained or reinstated. That is what is meant by parity prices, and "parity prices" is a slogan you will hear a great deal more often from now on. You will hear it not just from the farmers of my province, who know something about the general meaning of the phrase and who have suffered because there has not been parity; you will hear it from other classes of society in this country who also want parity.

Our consumer prices were kept in hand fairly well during the war and until the last couple of months, and for that I congratulate the government. But I say they are making a mess of things right now. They do not believe in controls; they admit they are going to give us a form of orderly decontrol. Heaven help us if it is any less orderly than at present, because now it is almost a rout. Yesterday the price of sugar went up one cent, and the price of gasoline is quoted at a cent higher as of yesterday or today. It went up two and a half cents in Regina. We are also threatened with increased freight rates. If we want to retain the capitalist system after the lessons taught by the war we have just gone through, when we found that by putting our social house in order we could provide fair distribution for goods in short supply, not just to those who could afford to go to the black market or those who had the largest number of tickets in the form of dollars; if we feel it is just too bad that the poor children cannot get milk at ten cents a quart; if in order to obtain diapers for our babies we have to receive them in parcels from Great Britain, a country which is rationing its own supplies and which is being looked upon with considerable disfavour because it is attempting a new social order, and that because there is not enough profit in manufacturing baby clothes in this country to give manufacturers an incentive to supply our own people; if we just want to let things drift away planlessly, we should support hon. gentlemen to the right, or those across the way. They offer no other course but drifting.

The other day I read a description of free enterprise which, in view of what I have told the house this afternoon, seems rather apt.

[Mr. Probe.]

Free enterprise was likened by a labour leader in this country to an ocean. Those who believed in free enterprise said to all the people, "Now, we will throw you all into the ocean. Those who are worthy will reach the shore because they will have the strength to persevere; those who are inefficient will perish." I want to give a little quotation from the remarks of the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Jackman), as reported at page 1772 of *Hansard*:

... one of the greatest virtues of the whole system of free enterprise is that those who are inefficient disappear. If they cannot hold their own and render service to the people at reasonable prices—

I want to be fair, so I continue the quotation:

—it is soon found that someone else takes their place and their business.

Mr. JACKMAN: I would just direct attention to the fact that the latter part of that quotation obviously refers to businesses; and I think the fact that inefficient businesses do disappear under the free enterprise system is a good deal like having white corpuscles in one's blood stream, because they purify the stream.

Mr. PROBE: That is right; but let me finish my own little allegory. Free enterprise drops us into the sea of economic opportunity. The trouble is that certain people have weights tied to their legs. Others, perhaps through circumstances such as I mentioned in connection with the Electric Boat Company deal or the briquetting plant at Estevan, are given waterwings to help them swim to shore, or they may even be picked up by a good sized raft or a speed boat properly equipped with good old privileged capitalism. It is that form of capitalism to which I object, and it is for these reasons that I want the government not only to retain what feeble controls they now exercise, but to reinstitute those controls which have been removed.

Mr. D. G. ROSS (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, I am rising for just a few minutes because of a statement made by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) in reply to my colleague the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario (Mr. Macdonnell). The hon. member mentioned that there were some 140,000 employees of the government, and the minister said the number was 135,000, according to the bureau of statistics. I do not want that statement to go unchallenged, because, according to a return I have here, the number of employees of the government of Canada, including employees of boards, commissions and corporations appointed by the federal authority, was 173,961 as of December 31, 1946.