

Quebec. A comparison between wage rates, for instance, in Montreal and Windsor was striking. That was before the question of establishing a minimum wage had been raised by any party or group in this house. That was a long time ago, and at that time I had the help of the Liberal leader, who taught me how to prepare statistics. Afterwards, in 1930, we obtained the passing of an act, which was sponsored by the Hon. Peter Heenan, establishing a minimum wage provision applicable to all dominion public works. That proved to be useful to some extent. The government did not care to go farther on account of constitutional obstacles which had been mentioned in a judgment handed down earlier by the Supreme Court of Canada.

I regret that the Dominion of Canada is now setting a bad example. There is on the order paper to-day a question which has been there ever since March 29, concerning the very question raised in the house this afternoon. That question asks:

1. Who are the inspectors of the wartime prices and trade board, (a) for the province of Quebec, and (b) for each one of the other provinces?

2. What is the grade and salary of each one?

I already had the names of the inspectors, but what I cannot get is their salaries and their grades. The answer to this question will show that much higher salaries are received from the dominion government by inspectors who work in the province of Ontario than by inspectors of the same grade who work in the province of Quebec. That may be the very reason why it has taken such a long time to answer this question. I also complain of the fact that when I asked a similar question respecting employees of the unemployment insurance commission, the second part of the question was not put on the order paper. I received an answer to the first part. I shall ask the question again so that I can get a complete answer. The wartime prices and trade board, having available to them the names of all their inspectors, have no excuse at all for not answering my question at once as to the grades and salaries of their inspectors. The wartime prices and trade board have many inspectors in the province of Quebec and they are doing just as good work as the board's inspectors in the province of Ontario. There is no excuse whatever for not paying dominion employees in whatever province they work the same salary for the same grade of work.

I congratulate the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Roy) upon bringing these matters into the limelight, and I am sure that the minister will give the utmost consideration to his suggestions. I know very well that what he has

[Mr. Pouliot.]

said about the railway men having trouble is true. I have in my riding a good many railway employees, as well as others who have to take their lunch boxes with them. They require butter and sugar. Sometimes they are away from home for several days; they cannot get sugar or butter when they are away from home without ration cards and it is very embarrassing and inconvenient for them. Moreover, when men work hard they need more food. I hope it will be possible for the minister to meet the suggestion made in regard to these matters by the hon. member for Gaspé, and if he can meet the other suggestions made by the hon. member, it will be highly appreciated by the Canadian people.

Mr. DANIEL McIVOR (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this amendment, I ask myself how often and how long is this sort of thing to go on? I think of the debates that have taken up the time of this house, debates on fuel, debates on labour, debates on a secret session, and debates on other matters. I think of the debate on the battle off the coast of Gaspé between corvettes and a submarine that never was there. I think of these things and then ask, as a good many other hon. members must be asking, have certain members of this house the right to tax the patience of other hon. members indefinitely? I notice that in yonder corner there is only one hon. member who can stand the heat. I think we should get on with the business of this house. Let us, in the language of the street, cut out all this extra work.

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, before the vote is taken upon the amendment I should like to make my position clear with respect to one or two points with which the amendment deals. When this session of parliament commenced, this party of ours, which I have the honour to lead at the moment, made a declaration which we did not take lightly in a war-time period such as this. It was a declaration very sincerely meant. It was, in effect—I am not repeating my exact words—that we would not during this session dog the heels of the government with unnecessary criticism, but that criticism would be reserved for cases where a principle of a major nature was involved; and that, where a certain stand was in the interests of the country and the people at large, we would not hesitate to meet the government in a head-on collision on the particular point involved.

This is a serious time, not only for the government and for all members of the house but for the people as a whole. Bearing that in mind, I would offer this observation, though not in an unduly critical fashion, that