

commodity, such as wheat?" In return I ask, "How do they compute the cost of a mowing machine?" There seems to be no difficulty in computing that and determining what the farmer must pay. There seems to be not the slightest difficulty in determining the cost of a suit of clothes which the farmer must buy, or a pair of shoes. How are those costs computed? If a group of men went to work with thorough zeal to compute the cost of producing oats and barley and other farm commodities, I think they would have no difficulty in doing so.

Mr. GILLIS: I have had considerable correspondence in the past with the department on matters of this kind, and I am led to make these remarks to-day on account of the minister's observation that a lot of the difficulty to-day is owing to the inflated prices of land after the last war. We are going through a similar experience now. We have a land settlement scheme and there will be hundreds of soldiers who will settle on the land after this war. I am anxious that we shall not permit those who wish to make money out of the exigencies of war to create a situation similar to what we have now; that land speculators, looking ahead to feather their own nests, shall not be permitted to put their representatives on these boards. Most of the land to-day in western Canada and to some extent in eastern Canada is in the hands of the mortgage companies and banks. If you will note the personnel of the boards that are being set up to administer the soldier settlement scheme you will see that these are the very people who are in on the machinery that is going to administer the scheme. The subject of inflation is conveniently brought in every time that the interests of the common people are affected.

Let us, however, clarify our minds on this subject. I do not claim to be a monetary expert. I have another term than inflation for what is going on. It is profiteering, robbery, some people taking advantage of their country's emergency to make things easier for themselves and to guarantee their future at the expense of the country. Look at what happened in Britain. During the first seven months of the war, prices increased by twenty-five per cent. There was no ceiling on wage rates at that time, but prices of commodities were sent up by those who sought to take advantage of the confusion. Then from December, 1940, until the end of last year wage rates and the salaries of the mass of the people went up as high as thirty-seven per cent in some cases, and during the same period the increase in the cost of living was only 3.3 per cent. So that it is

obvious that the run-away in prices during the early months of the war was not caused by any economic disturbance in the wage rates and salaries of the great majority of the people.

I shall not go into details now, but the conditions I have described are to be found to some extent in my own part of the country, and the minister and those who devise the regulations will have to understand that all cases are not the same. There are men on the land to-day who took up the land twenty-five years ago and raised a family of boys and girls who have since grown up. Markets changed, and many of the settlers eventually found themselves unable to discharge their obligations. Some administrative latitude should be allowed to take care of these cases. I would not say that the obligations should be wiped out altogether, but a careful examination should be made of cases where there are hardships and if there are extenuating circumstances, some latitude should be allowed. I do want to urge on the minister at this time that land speculators be not allowed to go in and create a similar situation to what we had after the last war.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

46. Departmental administration, \$466,942.

Mr. REID: Even at this late stage of the session there is a matter of importance which I must bring up. I raised the question of honey prices in British Columbia when the minister's estimates under the war appropriation were before the committee, and on the following day the minister was good enough to bring down to the house an answer given to him, I suppose, by the wartime prices and trade board, in which the statements made by the beekeepers of British Columbia were contradicted. I immediately air-mailed the minister's statement out to the beekeepers, and I am taking the opportunity now on behalf of the beekeepers to refute the statements given to the minister, I presume by the wartime prices and trade board. I make the statement that the board have given him wrong information, and I am going to place on the record alongside the statement the minister gave, the latest information I have received from the beekeepers of British Columbia. I received this letter from the British Columbia honey producers' association:

For your information I want to say that the cost of a 14-ounce jar of British Columbia honey before the war was 25 cents. A one-pound jar sold for 30 cents, although the cut