

laissez-faire Liberal will admit was contrary to his best normal inclinations. It stepped into the field of controlling the economy of Canada because it was felt necessary by such gentlemen as the present Minister of Justice, to whom I wish to pay every tribute for the job he did. May I say that I believe the country has always paid the right hon. gentleman the tribute to which he is entitled.

Under pressure of war emergency the Liberal government did something which I say was foreign to its true instincts, that of managing the economy of this country. Certainly it would be opposed to the instincts of my hon. friends to my right, and I believe it is contrary to the expressed instincts of my hon. friends to my left. There is only one party in this House of Commons which believes that the government did adopt a policy which should be used in every crisis, provincial autonomy or other arguments notwithstanding. I believe there are constitutional means of coming to an agreement, so that whenever there is a crisis, whatever its nature, those things can be done which must be done for the welfare of our people. I say the government did a good job by adopting controls, a measure which, as I say, was against its normal inclination to undertake. There was no successful alternative, as it felt and as we agree, to meet the crisis in Canada as a nation. The controls which were instituted as a result of that war emergency were, shall we say, reasonably equitable to most of Canada and to most of its people. I say reasonably so, because proper economic control cannot be combined with a major retention of the profit motive. However, as I say, with that one fly in the ointment, the government stepped into the control picture. Of course adjustments were made from time to time, based on the pressure techniques that the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, labour unions, federations of agriculture, housewives, consumers' leagues and others may have been able to employ. The amount of success that their pressure was able to give to their own group depended a good deal, I would say, on the general attitude of the government to matters respecting social welfare.

There were some good results. We developed a form of labour relations, I think, under national supervision. Again, of course, the hon. member for Stanstead will say, "in opposition to the needs of provincial autonomy" but it was something which we used in a national emergency. There was a form of extension of unionization and collective bargaining which did bring a somewhat closer relationship between wages and the cry for a minimum standard of wages. I say, however, that the government was not entirely sincere in that—and I am not saying that in an unfair

way at all—because the dominion government's own pay sheets were not always in accord with the various minimum standards of wages set up by the provinces. The federal government used the fact that it was a sovereign body in order to avoid its obligations and, as nearly as I can tell, is doing so at the present time.

For example, in my own city of Regina, as a result of complaints brought to my attention, I questioned the government with respect to rates of pay at the Regina ordnance depot, and the answer given with regard to conditions there at December 31, 1946, was as follows. One question was, "How many, if any, of the civilians employed at the Regina ordnance depot in October, November or December, 1946, received pay at a rate below the Saskatchewan minimum wage of \$18.50 a week?" If the Liberal party is to be fair with respect to planning for proper wages for the people of Canada, it should certainly be a fair employer itself. However, the answer to this question was that in the Regina ordnance depot there were three employees of the federal government receiving less than \$18.50 a week.

I asked this further question, "In what employment classification, if any, were wages being paid below the rates recommended to the civil service commission?"

There is a practice, as you know, Mr. Speaker, that wages paid by government departments or on government contracts are supposed to bear some relationship to the going wage in the area in which the work is being done. With regard to the Regina ordnance depot, certain recommendations were made to the civil service commission that certain people be given wages which corresponded to the going wage in the area; yet twenty-three employees at that ordnance depot, which employed 370 employees, received wages below what was recommended as being the going wages for the district: three clerks, grade 1-A; one typist, grade 1; three clerks, grade 2; one clerk, grade 3; thirteen packers and helpers; one storeman, technical stores; one stenographer, grade 3. So I say that the federal government, in spite of being forced into a position where control over a labour condition was assumed by it, in hiring its own help did not live up to the obligations which it imposed on the rest of the Canadian economy.

This is another good result that I should like to say came from this controls programme forced on the government. There is now, and has been for a year or so, a form of orderly marketing of some farm products, with floor prices until 1950. I do not intend to reopen the debate on floor prices; but when I think of floor prices I am reminded of what one of my friends out west said when he made refer-