

do but, rather, a government and two opposition parties opposing the Progressive Conservatives.

Why does the NDP insist on supporting the Liberal government and neglecting its role as an opposition party? Quite a few western NDP members do not try to hide the reason. They frankly point out that so far as western Canada is concerned, the opposition comes from the revitalized Conservatives. With only seven out of the 68 western seats being held by the Liberals, the NDP feel threatened by the Conservatives and hope to stall off an election as long as possible.

My good friend Jed Baldwin, the MP for Peace River, has pointed out that Mr. Lewis and his men will huff and puff but will never bring the House down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. Perhaps it is late, but I think I should remind the hon. member that it is not permitted in this House to identify hon. members by other than their constituency or their function in this House. I think we should follow, although it is a late hour, the rules and procedures that have been followed in past years in this House.

**Mr. Hurlburt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assure you it will never happen again. The hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) may join the Liberals, but other NDP members, most of them from Alberta, are starting to feel the heat. The Prime Minister announced a so-called three-pronged attack on inflation which turned out to be a three-pronged attack on the west. He placed controls on beef exports. He placed a ceiling on wheat prices, and the incentive to explore for oil by our entrepreneurs has come under heavy criticism. The Progressive Conservatives, with whom I am proud to be associated, have a policy which would attack inflation but which would not backfire on western Canada. As NDP members feel the criticism coming on stronger, perhaps they too will start thinking about the people who elected them.

So far as I am concerned, the largest contributing factor so far as inflation is concerned has been the government and its administration. As I look back, I recall that the sheepmen in western Canada were selling lambs for 18 cents a pound. There was no subsidy on wool, but the government at that time would not step in and place a floor on prices. Instead, the government allowed New Zealand and Australian lamb to come in until all the sheepmen had to disperse their herds, with the consequence that the price of imported lamb continued to rise and is still rising.

As I look back at the livestock industry, I recall that the previous minister of agriculture spent time trying to sell the Prime Minister to the west when he should have been trying to sell the west to the Prime Minister. Time was wasted in the fight on Bill C-176. However, the people of western Canada are very thankful for the few strong Conservative members who were here at that time to see that the bill did not go through.

The same applies to the hog business. When the prices of hogs were low, no floor prices were established. The western farmer feels it would have been far more economical for the Canadian government to have supported a few producers, because there are far more consumers than producers in this country.

### *Cost of Living*

● (0300)

Another reason for the inflation we have today, in the opinion of people in the west, is that this country is in need of salemen to beat the bushes of the world and sell our produce. In 1970 we had the Lift program and much of our land was taken out of production. Had we had a government which was in tune with the rest of the world—they could see what was happening in Russia, the drought conditions that prevailed; they could watch other nations becoming more affluent and they could see that our agricultural products would be in demand all over the world—and looked into the future with a long-range plan, we would not be in the position in which we find ourselves today.

The first speech which I made in the House concerned trucking. I think our transportation system has contributed to the rise in prices because we have not allowed any competition for the railways. Hon. members know as well as I do that the railway cars travelling to eastern Canada with livestock go back empty, and the grain cars travelling to eastern Canada also go back empty. If trucks were allowed to compete with the railways, you can rest assured that individual operators would be hauling produce both ways, and as a result the price would go down.

Another factor contributing to inflation is the fact that the government does not recognize agriculture as an industry. In my constituency, private enterprisers have established large plants and have financed them. This government has made large loans to American-owned firms under the DREE program, thus creating competition for our companies. The same is true in respect of another manufacturing firm: a \$640,000 grant under the DREE program was provided, \$440,000 from the IDB, \$200,000 from another department—and 30 days after this deal was made, the firm was sold to an American company. I believe that this type of thing has definitely contributed to the inflation we are experiencing today.

So far as oil is concerned, the members of the party to my left have been criticizing large corporations, but I am afraid of what will happen if we do not allow such corporations to continue developing our natural resources, opportunity only knocks once. I also feel that another factor contributing to inflation is the absolute lack of long-term financing for the farmer. If we are to produce food cheaper, we must give him the same type of financing that we give to people in other industries.

When I say that people on the land have experienced two wars, you might say, "So did many of us." But in many cases the women were left at home on the farms. The went through the depression, plus the inflation we have today. At that time there were no work stoppages and no strikes; only a determined effort to win. All they ask for is the right to fail or the right to succeed. I think they deserve this right. If we want our food costs reduced, I beg this House to be ever mindful of the importance of agriculture. As our urban centres grow and we have representation according to population, we will find that the majority of votes will be centered in the urban communities. But I feel we should always remember that agriculture is the "number one" industry in this nation and our farmers deserve every consideration we can give them.