

view which the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) gave in May, 1946, as reported in the *Sunday Express*. I have not the time at the moment, but I may return to it. In this interview the Minister of Agriculture stated that the only reason Britain was charged a lower than world price was that the wheat was allowed to go to Britain and nowhere else. He condemned the British people for distributing on the continent a part of what they received. So far as I am concerned I am only too willing that the British people and our other allies should receive wheat at a reasonable price. Over and over again I have repeated the right to the assurance for the farmers of Canada of the world price, and that if any amount is to be paid for advertising it should be paid by the government itself.

We hear much about inflation. The government compares prices of 1921 with 1946 using a different cost of living index. Anyone who claims that the cost of living in this country has risen only about twenty-one per cent realizes that these are official figures, but they do not take into consideration all the commodities which the individual is required to buy. As a matter of fact nobody is able to find out how the present index is figured out.

Mr. ILSLEY: Oh, yes.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I shall give my right hon. friend an answer in that regard. The present index covers a few commodities, but it does not begin to cover the commodities which have to be purchased, nor does it begin to show the true picture of the cost of living index in this country. As a matter of fact the dominion bureau of statistics has no records on the subject. On June 4 I received a letter from the bureau in reply to a letter I had written in an endeavour to secure a chart showing the various goods and commodities from which the price ceiling had been removed, the date of the removal and the ceiling in each case and the then prices, the present wholesale and retail price, and so on. The answer given by the dominion statistician was that it was impossible to give these figures, and he said:

For further information I suggest that you communicate with the wartime prices and trade board.

In other words, to-day there are no certain records to show the degree to which prices have increased in regard to the commodities from which the price ceiling has been removed.

When one speaks of price ceilings one thinks of rackets across the country. There are black market rackets. It is not permissible for me to refer in particular to the one I

mentioned the other day, namely, La Banque Provinciale du Canada. I shall not refer in any way to particulars which will interfere with the case before the courts or the cases that are to come before the courts, but the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent) said the other night that there were no grounds whatever for reflections upon the bank generally. I say to him that on the basis of the material which was placed before me, the records showed that of eighty-three branches of the bank which were investigated, in eighty there was a departure from the regulations and irregularities and, what is more, while every other bank in the country was willing and anxious to carry out its responsibility, La Banque Provinciale showed no indication or willingness to carry out the instructions of the wartime prices and trade board, and in point of fact in many cases neglected to reply to requests on the part of the board. This is one example, and it is one of many across the country covering not only ordinary irregularities. In this case there were forgeries in certain cases, forgeries of coupons to the extent of 10,000 pounds of butter in one coupon and amounting to a total of one and a half million pounds of butter and a great deal of sugar. That situation prevails in other parts of the country. In the report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police some indication is given of the extent to which these rackets have developed across the country and, I suggest, are not being proceeded against with the celerity and certainty which the circumstances require and conditions should demand.

We find ourselves in this position in this country—rising prices, shortages of material, production necessary and Canadians migrating from Canada. The government brings down a budget in which, to use the words of the Right Hon. Mr. Fielding, spoken many years ago—

They promise, prepare, propose, postpone,  
And end by letting things alone.

Substantial reductions in taxation, by inference, in 1945 were promised by the right hon. minister. Yet this budget shows spendthrift recklessness. It shows that the government is still on a spending spree of controllable expenditures. It shows more; it shows that there is no power in the minister, sincere as he is in his desire to curtail extravagance, to control the bureaucracy which makes possible this overexpenditure.

Moreover, the budget indicates that the war complex, the billion dollar mentality, is still the mentality of the bureaucracy which prepared this budget. I think of one example