

*Lumber and Plywood Price Stabilization*

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

and have found that roundwood exports are nominal and that Canada was in fact a net importer of logs last year. Recent action initiated by the government of British Columbia in co-operation with British Columbia industry would suggest that the volume of log exports will be still lower in 1969. I am satisfied that effective control is being achieved under the act.

In a situation of strong demand in relation to supply it is important that the longer term interests of the industry in domestic and foreign markets is not prejudiced by short term market considerations. Given the importance of our domestic requirements for housing and other purposes and our long standing export connections, I look to the industry to safeguard the requirements of traditional customers, both domestic and foreign, and resist any tendency to neglect the Canadian market in favour of speculative short term export demand.

Following consultations with certain cabinet colleagues, a number of steps have been taken to ameliorate the situation. Representation has been made to the railways by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) urging that an adequate supply of railway cars be made available for the movement of wood products. The Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) is presently discussing with the provincial governments concerned the question of additional supplies of timber to be made available to industry until such time as a more stable supply/demand balance is achieved. I have also been assured by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) that his department will be alert to any threat of anti-competitive developments in the prevailing special market circumstances.

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, because of the high regard we all have for the minister and because he has to labour under a tremendously heavy burden, having to answer to this house in connection with the problems of marketing and transportation of wheat, I struggled desperately to try to find something nice to say about the minister's statement and to be neutral, but try as hard as I could I found it impossible to do so.

This is one of the most innocuous statements we have had the pleasure of hearing in this house for some time. What the minister is in fact saying is that the sky is blue, God is in His heaven, the Liberal party will govern the country, wait a little while and everything will be fine.

**Mr. Baldwin:** I do not find much enthusiasm in that patter of applause on the other side. What we have seen is a demonstration of the absolute inability of this government to cope with the serious problems that are facing us.

Some time ago the government set up the Department of Industry Trade and Commerce, and the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) indicated in his statements, by implication, and in the legislative orders which were advanced that all of these problems about pricing would be brought within the control of the federal government. The statement made by the minister has been produced in response to a number of questions by various hon. members of the opposition that deal with the price and supply of logs and the price and supply of lumber. These questions were addressed to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer), to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) and to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

This is the answer we have been given to take back to our constituents. It suggests that the whole thing is a façade; that we have nothing at all that will in any way deal with these very serious problems of high prices that affect this country, particularly in relation to housing. I only wonder that the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) did not get into the act and give us his views in the matter.

We on this side of the house, Mr. Speaker, are bitterly disappointed. We feel there has been no adequate answer given, and that despite all the high promises made by all ministers, including the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, this government seems to have no power at all to control the increasing escalation of prices in this country.

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, I was going to begin my very brief comments by asking why the minister had produced this statement at all. It seems to me that it would have been better had he waited until some of the steps that he says have been taken produced some results about which he could inform the house, instead of making this kind of shadowy statement that really says very little.

We are concerned about two matters referred to in the statement. One of them is the export of logs, which has resulted in unemployment on the west coast. The fact is that there is still some short time in some