

to the fact that the Prime Minister of that day had done certain things to extend government operation.

Now I wish to say a word or two on the subject of controls. At the end of the war I think almost everybody felt (1) that controls had served a useful purpose, (2) that they could not be done away with immediately, (3) that they hoped they would be done away with as soon as possible, and (4) that they wanted a continuing plan known and understood by the public. In respect to the first three points I am sure the government would agree, but in respect of the last I think we are entitled to criticize the government. I think we can say: (1) that there should be a developing plan; (2) that it should be known; (3) that it should operate in successive stages; (4) that some trouble should be taken to sell it to the public, as trouble was taken when price controls were put on in 1941, when a good job was done; and (5) that the plan should be a general one. The present confused situation in the United States has been the occasion of a new statement by the minister on the subject of controls, but the main principles to which I shall refer are not affected by what has happened; actually they are emphasized by it.

At the present time the picture one has is of the attempt to deal with a multitude of individual cases, and I submit that it is doomed to failure before it starts. What happens? Case A is considered, and it takes some time. It cannot be done overnight. It may take weeks to assemble all the facts, or at any rate a considerable time. If everything else remained static while that was being done, it might be all right; but what happens? Everything else is in a state of flux, so I suggest that by the time a decision is reached in a great many cases, it is already obsolete; and I suggest that has been going on in scores and perhaps hundreds of cases and that we are getting an uneven situation in every direction. The triviality of the cases with which the board still deals is almost beyond belief. I have mentioned here previously that it came to my attention that the price of horseshoeing in one of the small towns in my riding has been under control. The hope was expressed by the board that they might be able to lift the ceiling, and I was asked to hold up the matter for a week while that was being considered. Finally there was a civil and courteous statement that it could not be done, that is was part of a pattern. That, to me, is pure doctrinaire intellectualism. Therefore my feeling is that if this is going to be done successfully it has to be done to some extent "by and large", and that we cannot proceed by dealing with each

[Mr. Macdonnell.]

individual. Also the public must be taken into the confidence of the government as they were with regard to control.

What has the minister to say about it? I quote his words:

We believe it is wise, and practically necessary, gradually to relax and remove the controls which made up our stabilization programme.

That is all very well, but there must be some method indicated, some plan that is intelligible and for which public support may be sought.

This raises the question of publicity. The original price control was sold to the public in a most effective manner. People were made to believe in it. It is now necessary to sell decontrol to the people in the same effective way, and get them to believe in it also.

Next comes the human equation. In order to get decontrol we must have people who believe in decontrol. People who have been working controls have believed in them. But is it likely that they are going to become enthusiastic about decontrol? I think that to ask them to work for decontrol will be like asking a lot of admirals to decide upon reducing the navy.

Let us be realistic about it. We have a group of men who have had unlimited power in their hands, and who have the controlled economy complex. They are industrious and high-minded, and no doubt convinced that their controlling hands are still necessary. It will be hard for these men to believe really in decontrol. Must it not almost inevitably seem to them a risky thing to trust people to look after their own affairs again?

Then, one final point on the matter of control. The key problem of control is to keep increases in prices and increases in wages related to each other, but at the present time we can see only too clearly that this is not being done. What we actually find is something like this: An increase in wages granted by the national war labour board, then an increase in prices granted by the wartime prices and trade board, then a further demand from labour for increased wages to offset the increased price which the producer, on the other hand, regarded as compensating him for the increase in wages already given.

So long as the period of control exists, and until employers and employees can get back to the healthy business of making their own agreements, there is only one solution for this difficulty, namely to bring employers and employees together and let them hammer out their differences of wages and prices before a joint authority which can arrive at an over-all decision.

This is the only way to get production, which is the answer to every problem which-