

force down prices. It seems to me this statement is completely in accord with the findings of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Consumer Credit and Prices of which I had the honour to be co-chairman. In its report the committee stated:

There are quite acceptable substitutes for many types of food and consumers can affect the prices of any particular items simply by not buying them, if they think the price is excessive.

I should like to emphasize that this is the very essence of a free competitive market economy of which businessmen speak so glowingly. If things are too high in price, consumers should seek substitutes or alternatives. I note with interest a report in today's *Globe and Mail* to the effect that there has been a reduction in meat prices in Toronto. This is attributed to consumer resistance. I think this is a very healthy market situation. But let me repeat that consumer resistance can best be effective in a freely competitive market. This is not the case at present in the Vancouver area of British Columbia. There are approximately 100 chain stores closed in the Vancouver area as a result of labour-management conflict. There, the consumer market has clearly been disrupted and there have been suggestions by some that appreciable price increases have taken place as a result.

I should like this evening to make a public appeal to the merchants whose stores are still open in the Vancouver area. I am appealing to them to exercise restraint. To be blunt, I am appealing to them to resist taking advantage of this temporary market situation which prevails. I have instructed my regional office in Vancouver to make daily reports to my office. Some 55 inspectors located in British Columbia will be carrying on regular inspections of those stores that are still open in the Vancouver area. As I say, I shall be receiving daily reports of what is happening in this prices situation as long as the labour situation persists. If any gouging should appear as a result of these reports from my inspectors, I give notice now that I shall not hesitate for one minute to name those people who my inspectors find are gouging the consumers in the Vancouver situation.

Let me add that any temporary interruption of market supplies in any part of Canada can cause similar problems. My colleague the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson), and also the hon. member, have alerted me to a situation resulting from transportation difficulties in Labrador. Let me say again that my field

staff will be examining carefully any abnormal situations which develop and we will be taking whatever action is necessary under whatever powers we have.

• (10:10 p.m.)

[Translation]

CANADIAN CONFEDERATION—MANITOBA—  
ERECTION OF A MONUMENT COMMEMORATING LOUIS RIEL

**Mr. Bernard Dumont (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, on May 7 last, I asked the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) whether he could help Manitoba by granting financial help towards erecting a monument to the memory of Louis Riel.

The hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and perhaps all hon. members had planned their participation to this important event in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we are now studying the official languages bill. The premiers of Quebec and Ontario have signed cultural agreements. The Secretary of State, for his part, travels across the land and shows interest in all French minorities. To my mind, those are historical facts that create ties between our historical past and the future of our country.

Now, another event is of great current interest. In a year from now, that is on July 15, 1970, we shall celebrate the centennial of Manitoba within confederation.

Manitoba was the first new province in Canada, after 1867. Its constitution respects integral bilingualism, glossing over certain deplorable incidents that occurred in 1890 and 1916. We take pleasure in recalling that the Manitoba constitution, which is so respectful of bilingualism, was the result of very important events. Those events were not understood by the majority when they occurred, and they were often badly interpreted later on.

For a long time, the Métis addressed their complaints to the federal government. But Ottawa was far away. The files shuttled back and forth between Winnipeg and the federal capital, which returned them for an administrative technicality without solution. The least difficulty as to any piece of land gave rise to endless correspondence. That distance, those delays favoured at that time the policies of Sir John A. Macdonald, the great procrastinator. But the Metis were getting impatient. They visualized authority in a more simple way.