

ments from the five year wheat pool can be made without an amendment to the wheat board act. The amendment has been prepared and will be on the order paper within the next few days. I am advised by the wheat board that payments can be made promptly after that amendment is approved by the house. Participation certificates for the 1945 crop are already in the hands of the wheat board, and cheques will issue, I am told, over a very short period as soon as the legislation is passed.

### PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

#### FUEL OIL FOR FERRY STEAMERS "ABEGWEIT" AND "PRINCE EDWARD"

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. CHESTER S. McLURE (Queens): In view of the short supply of fuel oil, as per statement made a few days ago, I desire to direct a question to the hon. the Minister of Transport. Is there a sufficient quantity of fuel oil in storage at Borden and Tormentine for the ferry steamers *Abegweit* and *Prince Edward* on the Borden-Tormentine route for the winter and spring seasons of 1948?

### POSTAL SERVICE

#### SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS TO RURAL MAIL COURIERS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. CHESTER S. McLURE (Queens): Seeing that I did not get an answer to my previous question I will try another one. I desire to direct a question to the hon. the Postmaster General, or the Prime Minister, or both. Is it the intention of the government to set up a special committee of the house to study the problems of the rural mail couriers in order to give these most faithful servants a living wage?

Hon. ERNEST BERTRAND (Postmaster General): It is not the intention of the government to establish a committee, but as I said before, a bill will be brought in to give authority to make further supplementary payments.

### PRICES

#### APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INQUIRE INTO PRICE INCREASES AND MATTERS PERTAINING THERETO

The house resumed from Monday, February 9, consideration of the motion of Mr. Mackenzie King that a select committee be appointed to examine and report on the causes of the recent rise in the cost of living, and matters pertaining thereto.

Mr. T. J. BENTLEY (Swift Current): When the debate was adjourned last night I was mentioning that when Canada developed a shortage of United States dollars, the government acted rapidly to take some corrective measure. When however Canadian citizens are faced with a shortage of Canadian dollars the government considers that a powerless committee is a good enough answer to this house and to the country. By their actions in these two matters they invite the suspicion that there is an ulterior motive, and possibly Mr. Warren Baldwin, writing in the *Globe and Mail* on January 9, 1948, hit on that motive. Mr. Baldwin has this to say, and I quote from a press dispatch of that day in the *Globe and Mail*:

Plans crystallizing here to take care of Canada's physical contribution to the still hypothetical European recovery program are predicated on a greater degree of austerity than is yet being practised by the Canadian consumer . . . the Canadian public will be expected to produce an exportable surplus by cutting down on domestic consumption . . . counting on the rising costs of living in Canada to assist by cutting down the present spending spree . . . This principle applies in the food field itself. . . If higher prices themselves fail to take care of the situation it may be that other forms of pressure will have to be used.

And further on he says:

There are at least some members of the government who are finding it hard to shed very many tears at soaring prices so long as it contributes to the goal which it is expected the United States will demand that Canada achieve.

I suspected, and apparently he suspects, that Canada is being sold to the United States, and neither Canadian citizens nor this house of parliament know what the terms of the sale are. We only know the end result so far, and that is the high cost of living. I consider this method a rather cruel way of reducing consumption. If in order to play our proper and honourable part in assisting Europe to recover it is necessary to reduce our consumption, then every Canadian should make a sacrifice, and equality of sacrifice cannot be achieved by allowing prices to rise to a point where our less fortunate citizens are forced by economic pressures to do without many of the basic necessities of life. That equality of sacrifice can only be achieved by some form of rationing, and we have suggested the imposition of price controls and the payment of subsidies as expedient and more practical than straight rationing, although even that may be necessary for some articles.

The payment of subsidies will require the imposition of the excess profits tax, and I can see no hardship to corporations in that imposition. We have already had put on the record here some of the profit increases by