

cent per annum. The miners there work for the company I used to work for and they are fairly well paid. Even so, their wages do not keep pace with the high cost of living in the far north. For instance, construction workers or mine employees pay up to \$200 a month to rent a trailer. I submit that for \$200 a month you could rent a reasonable house in Ottawa; in fact, you could rent a very nice house. Yet in the far north it costs \$200 a month to live in a trailer, which does not represent a good living standard by any stretch of the imagination. I hope the minister will look into the special areas I have mentioned and do something to relieve the pressures that people all across Canada are feeling from high living costs.

Mr. Johnston: I shall be brief, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member for Sudbury wanted to see the feathers fly and yet he wanted the minister's wings to be clipped. I assure him that our avian interest is confined to seeing prices go down. I too was interested in the hon. member's discussion of a prices review board because what the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway described as a toothless wonder has now become food for thought. It does not matter how the minister or the government hold out their hands to the N.D.P.; their hands will be bitten.

I should like to ask the minister a question I have asked in the house on a couple of occasions. Has his department yet made a decision to appeal the fines levied against wholesale companies engaged in the mandarin orange trade in British Columbia? These fines were announced some months ago and at the time they seemed to me to be extremely low. Working out the mathematics of the highest fine and considering the some 20 years during which prices were fixed I found that it amounted to about \$500 annually. I submit that this amounts to nothing more than a yearly licence to fix prices. I am sure that if any logging truck operator in the province were asked what his annual licence cost he would come up with a figure not too far removed from \$500 for an operation on a much smaller scale.

● (4:40 p.m.)

I am convinced that the companies involved would not have gone to all the fuss and bother to fix the price if it was only going to yield them \$500 a year. I think that the fines and the profits involved could not have been related in any way and I would

Supply—Consumer and Corporate Affairs
like to know what is the decision on this matter.

Mrs. Wadds: Mr. Chairman, I regret very much that I feel obliged to take even a few minutes in the debate at this stage of the life of this parliament. I was prepared to waive my opportunity on Friday if it would have expedited the business of the house but now that the debate has been ranging so broadly I would like to say a few words. Incidentally, when I say "ranging broadly" I am not referring to the hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke. Some of the speeches we have been listening to have ranged rather widely. I abhor obstructionist tactics in this house and it is certainly not in that spirit that I am rising because I would be very agreeable to co-operate in expediting the business of the house at this moment. In fact I feel the greatest sympathy for the contestants for the Liberal leadership to be decided in the first week of April. They should really be visiting the delegates at this moment.

It seems to me it is an example of the government's peculiar attitude to democracy that they have arranged things so that the members of the Liberal party are stuck in one place when they should really be some place else. It was not the fault of the opposition that the government did not foresee this happening and put its own house in order before the date was chosen for their very important convention. I regret, as many in my party do, the difficulties in which this puts many of the contestants, but I want to make it clear that it is entirely their own doing that this has happened.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is a most amiable minister and very popular both inside the house and outside. I would not want anything said at this time to be detrimental to his chances. In the first place I personally think, and I know thousands of others do also, that the Liberal party could do worse than choose him. In the second place it would be grossly unfair if anything said at this late date on the supplementary estimates were particularly harsh on him because, as ministers go, he is relatively moderate in his spending. In fact he could be considered a bit of a novice among the high-spending Liberal ministers. However, since he went against some rather important advice in the enlargement of his department to include consumer affairs, advice from a group that was set up purposely to advise the government, it seems to me only natural that some questions should be answered by him.