

The Address—Mr. Coldwell

made between the freezing of any wages and salaries at a low level and wage stabilization. I quote from the brief as follows:

The labour movement recognizes that wages could go up fast enough and far enough to break a price ceiling, though it sees no immediate danger of anything of the sort. It believes that the proper way to deal with this question is a government-labour-management conference to work out methods of wage stabilization. This offers a prospect of a wage policy which will do two things, both essential: (a) preserve the spirit, the principle, of collective bargaining, and (b) bring the experience of labour and management into the defence effort. If our government institutes a general policy of price and production controls, labour is ready to take part in a joint government-labour-management conference to consider wage stabilization.

That is clear-cut, but it has never been accepted by the government. It discounts entirely this parrot cry that if you are going to freeze prices you must freeze wages. Many of the wages and salaries paid in this city at the present time could not be frozen at their present levels. I have been amazed in the past five or six weeks to be told by men standing behind counters, holding as I thought fairly responsible jobs, that although they were married they were earning less than \$150 per month. The girls employed in some stores in this city are earning considerably less than \$150 a month, as are some of the labourers. Let me repeat the word of organized labour, and I stress the word "organized". They say that if the government institutes a general policy of price and production controls they are ready to consider ways and means of effecting wage stabilization.

I would like to go somewhat exhaustively into our experience during the last war and what was said of it subsequently, but time will not permit. When we talk about controls we are led to believe that there are no controls now, but the fact that the government intends to amend the Combines Investigation Act indicates that there are controls of some description. I was quite interested on Thursday or Friday to read the reaction of the Canadian Manufacturers Association to the MacQuarrie report and to the suggestion that legislation would be brought into the house to prevent price fixing. I notice that statements in opposition were made by Mr. Norman Leach, who stated:

It is an undemocratic and high-handed move to deny a manufacturer the right to protect his good-will right down to the consumer.

Then he added:

If all controls are removed a lot of articles will go up in price at once.

Was he referring to the people's controls? Was he referring to parliamentary controls, instituted by those responsible to the people's duly elected representatives? Not at all.

There are controls. They are objecting to the removal of controls instituted by members of the Canadian Manufacturers Association. We have known for some time that these controls exist. It is not a question of whether we are going to have controls, it is a question of who is going to do the controlling.

Mr. MacInnis: These are people who are opposed to government controls.

Mr. Coldwell: These are the people who from one end of the country to the other opposed government controls. Not only did they make speeches; they financed radio programs which I think were a contravention of our radio act when they engaged in political discussions over the air on behalf of their own Canadian Manufacturers Association controls and political views. Let us bear this in mind when we hear of opposition to government action. Let us not forget the statement made by the Right Hon. Mr. Ilesley in this house in 1947 when he said that for every \$200 million we had spent on controls during the war it was estimated that the Canadian people had saved, either as consumers or as taxpayers, \$2½ billion.

Mr. Sinclair: What did he say two years later?

Mr. Coldwell: I am saying what Mr. Ilesley said at the end of the war when the operation was in his mind.

If my hon. friend thinks that is an extravagant statement, what about this one? Mr. Donald Gordon, who was chairman of the wartime prices and trade board, described the operation of subsidies and controls on Nov. 4, 1946, in these terms:

The payment of subsidies has meant a real saving to the people of Canada and has not been merely a transfer from one pocket to another.

Under a price control system, a subsidy paid to primary producers prevents merchandising costs from pyramiding as the product passes through the hands of the wholesaler and retailer to the final consumer.

The net result is that subsidies have cost the people of Canada, as taxpayers, far less than the additional prices they would have otherwise paid, as consumers.

That is Mr. Donald Gordon speaking. I have not heard that he wished to change that view.

In its report to the house the wartime prices and trade board said this:

The payment of subsidies distributes the burden of rising production costs according to ability to pay, whereas inflation distributes this burden according to the strength of one's bargaining power, with no regard to the financial need.

These statements are authoritative. They are not my statements, nor the statements of the C.C.F. party. They are statements of the