

With all due respect to the press, they misinterpreted what I said. Possibly I misinterpreted what Mrs. Plumptre said.

In our committee meeting, there were a lot of critical comments. Naturally, these came from opposition members. I think they were invited because this board, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Plumptre, has aggravated and antagonized. This board is satisfied that marketing boards are not in the best interest of the country. I admit that marketing boards are not adaptable to every product, but they serve well the needs of the producers they presently serve. The opinion of the Prices Board was probably derived from the fact the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Gray) saw fit to give the Canadian Consumer Association an additional \$100,000 to fight the marketing boards. There seems to have been some prejudice again shown here against marketing boards. It was suggested that marketing boards were the culprits in forcing food prices up. I would refer now to the example of eggs. Some two years ago the egg market in Canada was in a poor position and producers right across the country were facing bankruptcy. The marketing boards had been established in the provinces and had the national marketing board not been established we would have seen large companies picking up farm mortgages. The effect this would likely have had upon consumers would have led to even higher prices than they are paying today.

● (0100)

I think the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) must bear some responsibility in this connection, and I would point out that there is still one province which hasn't signed up and agreed to co-operate with the other provinces in Canada. I think the National Egg Marketing Board, if it is to have a fair chance of success, needs the help of the Minister of Agriculture to ensure that the one province to which I made reference co-operates in the program.

The Minister of Agriculture also has a responsibility to see that since feed costs are on their way down in all areas, to make sure that the boards do not exploit the consumers in a way which may have caused concern before. It is his responsibility to monitor the situation in Canada. At the present time feed costs in the production of eggs has dropped in the neighbourhood of between 5 cents and 8 cents a dozen. I think the minister has a responsibility to keep on top of the situation and see that the provincial boards toe the mark and do nothing to lose the credibility which they have built up to the present time.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that farmers have for too long been in the position where they have been the first to go down and the last to come up. They only want a fair market, as they will be the first to admit, and are only too willing to do their part to produce. They need to have confidence in the future and are more than willing to invest their money in advance if they can see fair market opportunities in the future.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make brief reference to a newspaper report of the results of a questionnaire sent out by the hon. member for Stormont-Dundas (Mr. Lamoureux). This matter was referred to in an earlier speech by one of my hon. friends, but I think it is a

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point which is worth repetition. The summary of the questionnaire results referred to in the press are as follows:

Do you favour wage controls? yes, 2,830; no, 1,195; undecided, 473.
Would you accept the imposition of some form of wage-price controls to combat inflation? Yes, 3,934; no, 496; undecided 319.

These questions were answered by some 5,425 people. I think that results such as these tell their own story, that the people of Canada in general are not satisfied with what they are getting right now. They don't want the type of hit and miss programs they are receiving.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, like many hon. members on both sides of the House, I think we are engaging this morning in a debate of some importance, not only to members of this chamber but to the general public. I doubt whether anyone needs to be reminded of the purpose of this debate but it is useful to recall at the outset the initial statement of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) in asking for this debate. He approached the subject by stating a debate was necessary because of the "uncontrolled inflationary pressures exemplified by the report earlier today of Statistics Canada". That is what the debate is all about, the fact that the country is governed by an administration which in effect has taken the view there is nothing it can do to deal with the rapid rise in the cost of living.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) when he spoke earlier today, said the government already knew what was taking place. My answer to him is that if such was the case the government was guilty of one or other of two things: it was either callous for failing to come forward with a substantial program to deal with the rising cost of living or it was stupid in believing that the measures it has taken to date could be of any real help in dealing with the serious inflationary situation which faces the country.

Quite frankly, I have been not only mystified but amazed by the degree of detachment and lack of sensitivity the government has shown in the face of this threat hanging over the Canadian people. Indeed, I was more than mystified and amazed. I was shocked by the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). In attempting to deal with this issue little more than a week ago, he suggested, in effect, that what could be done amounted merely to efforts to alleviate the effects of inflation without dealing with the underlying causes of inflation itself. Any government which reaches the point of believing it has lost control of the economy, as this government now admits, should, if it has any honesty and integrity left at all, consider the only sensible path open to them, and that is, depart the scene so that a government and a party could attempt to do those things which could set the economy back on a safer road. There can be no confidence in a government which says, on one hand, that we ought to limit production while, on the other hand, without embarrassment, the Minister of Finance is telling us, as he did this afternoon, that the overriding cause of inflation is a shortage of supply.

Many of my hon. friends have pointed out that we have experienced the injurious effects of the Lift program. The initial letters stand, I believe, for "Lower Inventories for Tomorrow". I certainly have not heard any member of the government proclaiming the virtues of that particular