

*Emergency Powers Act*

controls. I would not be at all surprised if the flour milling industry, referred to in that report, is opposed to price controls today. I would not be at all surprised if the management of the packing house industry is opposed to price controls. It is quite possible that the monopoly which manufactures fertilizer is opposed. It is quite possible that the three large manufacturing concerns that have a monopoly on synthetic yarns are opposed. Probably there are others. You know, there was a time when people across Canada referred to the Conservative party as the big business party.

**Mr. Knowles:** They have been pushed out now.

**Mr. Noseworthy:** Of course that was before they adopted the name "progressive" and before they became progressive.

**Mr. Knowles:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Noseworthy:** In name at least. I wonder if it is possible that there has been a sort of political revolution going on in big business in the last decade of good times for big business? Is it possible that within the last decade big business has despaired of getting much help from the Conservatives—

**Mr. Ferguson:** They will be turning to the C.C.F. next.

**Mr. Noseworthy:**—and they began to shower their material blessings upon the grand old Liberal party?

**Mr. Pouliot:** The best party in the world.

**Mr. Noseworthy:** I have no doubt every big business in Canada agrees with the hon. member. Is it possible that there is any connection between the support that the government is getting from big business today and their fear that they will not have public support for price controls? Other than that I certainly fail to see any logical reason why a government that was so wedded to price control during four years of the war, a government that did such a good job of price control during those years, should now be so reluctant to embark upon any form of price control.

There is another feature of price control to which I wish to refer. I presume that Mr. Towers, who gave an interview to the *Toronto Daily Star* on January 31, 1951, was expressing the official attitude of the government towards the present inflation when he referred to the past five years as a "mild inflation". Apparently the government still thinks of inflation as it exists today as a mild inflation.

**Mr. Knowles:** I would hate to see what they call the real thing.

**Mr. Noseworthy:** They are asking for legislation that can be used when an emergency arises, when we really get into an inflationary period. So far as most of the ordinary citizens of this country are concerned, the emergency is here now. Inflation is here now, and it is not so mild. I am going to put certain figures on the record again which no doubt have been referred to by other members. Here is how mild the inflation is for those who have to buy food, and a lot of people in Canada have to buy food. In April, 1946, the cost of living index in the cities for food was 135, and in December, 1950, it was 218.8. That is an increase of 83 points or 62 per cent. In other words, the 1946 food dollar was only worth 48 cents in 1950. I think it was the Minister of Finance who took the leader of the official opposition to task for suggesting that Canadian dollars were decreasing in value. It was the Liberal government which, six days before the election of 1945, assured everyone in this country, in practically every newspaper, that if they were elected they would maintain the purchasing power of the Canadian dollar. Since then the food dollar in Canada has fallen in value to 48 cents.

The index of rents rose from 112 in April of 1946 to 136, an increase of 21.5 per cent. That is not bad. Fuel and light rose by 31.3 per cent. Clothing rose by 50 per cent. In other words you could have bought two suits in 1946 for what you paid for one in 1950. Home furnishings and services increased by 46 per cent. These increases since April 1, 1946, indicate that this is not a mild inflation but a very real inflation for the people who have to buy food and clothing and home furnishings, and pay rent.

Perhaps a few more figures will bring out this point a little more graphically. I am going to compare the prices of certain specific articles of food in April 1946 with the prices of 1950. Beef has gone up 141 per cent since April, 1946; in other words the dollar with which you buy beef is not worth very much today. Coffee has gone up 127 per cent; veal is up 111 per cent. Even milk is up 79 per cent, notwithstanding the control the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming) said was exercised over milk prices in Ontario. I have yet to learn what control the government which his party supports has exercised over milk prices in this province. We may get that information from some other Conservative speaker. Flour is up 78 per cent and bread 67 per cent. Those are real increases, which cut into the earnings of every white-collar and industrial worker in the country. They cannot be considered mild.

Then in trying one moment to deprecate price control and the next moment to support