

gentlemen of the C.C.F. had had their way there would have been no committee at all. Their amendment was to the effect that the entire motion should be struck out and something else substituted in its place.

Let me come now to a further criticism. We have been told that the government's action has been evasive, that there has been inaction and that we are responsible for that. Let me say that if there has been any evasion or inaction the blame is not on the shoulders of the government; it is squarely on the shoulders of hon. gentlemen opposite.

We have been told by the leader of the C.C.F. that he was angry; we have been told by him and others that the public were angry. May I say that I do not think that anger is an argument or an answer to anything. I am quite prepared to admit that hon. gentlemen opposite have shown many signs of anger and displeasure, but I would say that so far as the public is concerned the anger is not against the government; it is very much against those who up to the present have been making it as difficult as possible for the government to get this committee appointed.

I want to give my C.C.F. friends and some other hon. gentlemen opposite something to think about in the next few days. If they listen to a statement I have here they will probably take it from the source from which it comes when they might not be prepared to take it from myself. No doubt some of them have already seen what has been appearing in many of the journals of this country with regard to their attitude in this debate. Let me just repeat what I have said. I have had conversations with a great many people during the course of this last week, and particularly at the beginning of this week. I have been asked, why this waste of public money? When is this waste of the time of parliament to cease? These people have said, "Surely it is possible for the house to make up its mind whether it wants a committee to investigate this matter without talking day after day to debate this question, delaying the consideration of other questions already on the order paper and others still to come."

I hold in my hand one editorial; I give it as a sample; I cite this particular editorial because I do not think anyone in this House of Commons will accuse me of having inspired the source from which this editorial came. It is an editorial from the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, of date February 6, 1948. The heading of the editorial is, "Evasive Inaction", the very words that hon. gentlemen opposite have been using. They say the government is seeking to evade. They have been accusing it of

inaction and so forth. In order that I may not be accused of omitting any significant clause in the editorial, I should like to read the whole of it to hon. gentlemen opposite and in particular to the members of the C.C.F. party. The editorial, as I say, is entitled, "Evasive Inaction". It reads as follows:

Opposition groups in the commons failed, during the debate on the parliamentary price probe committee, to achieve acceptance of several amendments. Some of these probably had merit. But the government's refusal to accept them is no excuse for the boycott of the committee threatened by the C.C.F. leader. Whatever else may be its defects, the committee, with all the authority of a commission, is empowered to examine and report on "the causes of the recent rise in the cost of living." This can mean a lot or little, depending on the diligence and initiative shown by the committee. There are here surely no barriers to full examination into those charges of profiteering and other abuses of the short supply situation in consumer goods, which have been flying back and forth across the country.

It is perhaps significant that the loudest cries about the "ineffectiveness" of the committee have come from the same quarters that have had the most to say about profiteering and other excesses. Mr. M. J. Coldwell, national leader of the C.C.F. party, is the chief advocate of the boycott—"We are going to be no party to this manoeuvre." He was also the author of the assertion that Canadian packing companies would make an "unearned increment" of \$10,000,000 out of the meat price rises in early January.

If Mr. Coldwell is not trying to escape the obligation of proving this latter statement, he should be willing and eager to give the committee a chance to demonstrate its effectiveness or lack of it. His course is simple. He can go before the committee at the earliest possible moment, restate his charge and bring forward the evidence to support it. If the parliamentary committee is, as he implies, an instrument of evasion, the nation will not be long in finding this out.

As matters stand it would seem that Mr. Coldwell and his followers are attempting to avoid the penalty for having talked too much by talking some more. If they are prepared to make good on their allegations of profiteering, they need not be fearful of the inadequacies of the committee. We venture to suggest that, lethargic as it has been on many things, parliament, when prodded by a convinced public opinion, will readily make good any shortcomings which may be found to exist.

I recommend that editorial as a sample of editorials which are appearing right across the country today, as evidence of what public opinion is asserting in this country today. The people are tired of having members of parliament seek to thwart a measure that will throw light on the question that, above all others, they wish to have investigated, which is what they want and what they recognize will be most effective of all in this matter.