

Mrs. STRUM: The other night the hon. member for Cochrane said he thought it was a good thing to let the person who bought meat and milk know how much it cost the farmer to produce those things. I want to point out through you, Mr. Speaker, to the members of this house that that does not represent what it costs the farmer; that in between the man who buys the milk and the man who milks the cow is a great distribution system which takes off often far more than the farmer who produces these commodities gets. Not only that, but these high prices create a great deal of confusion and resentment in the minds of the consumers. I live in cities for part of the year and hear the comments made, by people who do not know the situation, on the greed of the farmer, the way he is rolling in wealth and the profits he is making. High prices and the withdrawal of subsidies do not lead to understanding; they lead to more confusion, more resentment, and more beclouding of the picture. The farmers are not getting more than it is costing them; and hon. members on every side of the house will support that statement.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mrs. STRUM: Ask the farmers what it is costing them to produce a pound of bacon now that we have taken the ceiling off coarse grains. Ask the hon. member for Fraser Valley what it is costing to produce a dozen eggs—

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Hear, hear.

Mrs. STRUM: —or what it is costing the dairy farmers to ship coarse grain from the prairies now that we have put coarse grains on the speculative market again. It is not a matter of revealing what it costs the farmer. It is a matter of permitting a group of people to speculate in foodstuffs. The government should take action with regard to that by restoring the ceiling on coarse grains and taking them out of the hands of the speculators.

I shall sit down now, Mr. Speaker, but I urge the government to act. They should, of course, investigate. The committee should investigate. But I think we should not investigate with an eye to rationalizing our position. We should investigate with an eye to uncovering abuses, if abuses exist. But I do say that in the meantime, while the committee is investigating, the government should restore prices to a level which will permit the Canadian people to buy the protective foods which are needed every day, and should pay subsidies in order that the producers shall not suffer.

Mr. T. J. BENTLEY (Swift Current): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Question.

Som hon. MEMBERS: Filibuster.

Mr. BENTLEY: Two or three hon. members called "filibuster" when I rose. I should like to remind the house that I have not taken part in any debate since this session resumed, and spoke only once in the pre-Christmas session.

An hon. MEMBER: A nice time to choose.

Mr. BENTLEY: Yes, it is a nice time. Probably the house will be sitting until the middle of the summer, so that any time will be a nice time to make a speech. I have chosen this time to say what I have to say on this particular issue. First, I want to say that I appreciated the speech of the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Croll) the other day. It has been eulogized by others on this side of the house, and I wish to add my voice to theirs. I think the hon. member spoke words of wisdom. One part of his speech I did not quite like, however; that was when he said something about a little man on our backs. I want to assure the hon. member for Spadina that, as the popular song has it, the little man is not there; he was not there yesterday and he is not there again today. I have no little man on my back bothering me at all. Otherwise I agree with what he had to say.

I listened carefully the other day to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ilsley), because sometimes he inspires me with his sense of fairness, though at other times he has rather the opposite effect. He took it upon himself to chastise the British government when he told this house the British government had a tiger by the tail in the form of subsidies, and were afraid to let go. I have not heard any squawk like that from the British government, but I suggest that our government in Canada have a tiger by the tail in the form of inflation and runaway prices. They are afraid to let go. Now they hope they can swap places on the tiger's tail with a committee and, in the resulting confusion, escape the gaze of the tiger. The government wants to set up a committee with no responsibility at all, except, as they say, to discover facts, and time and again they have challenged us to say why we do not want that committee. Tonight I am going to submit some evidence which I hope will be factual enough to convince the government that something should be done now.