

I should like to quote from an article which appeared in the *Winnipeg Tribune* of May 17, 1969. It reads:

Ronald Basford, the federal minister of consumer and corporate affairs, has announced 27 regional offices will be established by his department—to be staffed by 600 persons. That's only the start. If this new department proliferates at the same rate as the department of manpower, there'll soon be thousands of righteous snoopers leeching on to the public purse.

That would be well and good if they could earn their pay by bringing about a reduction in the cost of goods and services as well as a better distribution of these goods and services rather than increase the taxpayer's load. But will they really do that? I doubt it. They are too concerned with the problems and complaints of the taxpayers and not sufficiently concerned with the problems that bring about the complaints. This article goes on to say that:

—during the last nine months of 1968, the federal department of consumer and corporate affairs processed 3,109 complaints. During that same period the Better Business Bureau here—with only a staff of four—processed 16,389 inquiries—

That gives us a basis for comparison and some idea as to what can be done. This article goes on to suggest that the reason for most of those inquiries was lack of information about the product concerned. It said that only 556 of the inquiries represented true complaints, and even those could be cleared up when they were taken up with the companies concerned. I am in full agreement with a paragraph in the article which reads as follows:

There can be no question that governments have a role to play in the area of retail trade practices—including advertising and selling claims and methods. The vast majority of businessmen here concede that a certain amount of government regulation is not only inevitable but also is desirable, to eliminate unfair competition from unscrupulous businessmen.

There is no question in my mind that the government should watch very closely the amalgamation, the merging and the combining of various companies so that we can keep prices as low as possible and allow all people an equal opportunity to enter into business. In other words, the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission should be more active. If we allow the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to run hither and yon dealing with consumer complaints which stem from lack of education rather than try to solve the problem, we will not get further ahead.

#### *Distribution of Goods and Services*

All this may serve as a political base from which the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs may be re-elected and re-appointed to the cabinet after the next election, but it will not bring about any real reduction in prices. What is the real problem? I suggest that the real problem of today's wage earner lies in his take home pay. Recently, a prominent speaker in the city of Edmonton—and I give this as an example—stated that Air Canada had tried to hire a test pilot of some ability who worked for Boeing Aircraft in the United States. At that time he received a salary of \$35,000 a year in the United States. Air Canada offered him \$3,000 more a year. He asked whether with the \$3,000 more a year his take home pay would be larger than he was getting in the United States. The accountants figured it out and said that Air Canada would have to offer him \$53,000 in order to equal the pay he took home from his job in the U.S. Naturally, he did not accept Air Canada's offer.

We speak about a brain drain. Is it any wonder that there is a brain drain when we have a Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and a Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) who will increase taxes by \$845,000 in one year and who have announced they will bring in another budget this year? I suppose we can expect another tax load and Canadians will again have to dig into their pockets.

I think that the distribution of goods and services would be more efficient if this government took the advice of a former minister responsible for housing who firmly believed that every taxpayer should own his own house and who gave him a chance to do so. He wanted to remove the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials and allow the taxpayer a deduction from his income tax for the payments on his house. I would go one step further. If we go back in history we will see that since 1941 the average wage has doubled. In February of 1969 the average wage earner received \$115 a week. But what have we done with the income tax exemptions? We have made no effort whatsoever to increase them. I believe that the income tax exemptions which were established back about 1941 at \$1,000 per single person should be increased to at least \$1,500 and married couples would then have an exemption of \$3,000. I am not asking for pie in the sky when I suggest this. I think we should be moving in this direction. I would go one step further.