

### *Increasing Food Prices*

As producers of these foods, farmers, and the people who work with them in government, know a lot about food that they wish every consumer knew.

You've got 85 delicious ways of balancing your family's nutritional needs at the red meat counter. That's how many different cuts of beef, pork and lamb there are today in the typical food market.

And if you have enough spirit of adventure to ring or call the meat man and ask about cuts you've never tried—and how to fix them—you'll be surprised at how much enjoyment, variety and nutritive value you can add to your meals.

Actually meat is a better buy than it was 10 years ago. For example, beef prices have risen only 20 per cent since 1960, compared with around 30 per cent for all consumer items. Yet during that time, the proportion that gets an expensive grain finish has doubled. Practically all pork is grain fed; almost all lamb is milk fed or grain fed.

Also the price has not increased as much to the consumer as the price of other items. The publication further states:

Virtually every piece of meat you serve can be tender and tasty if you know its quality grade.

Then, it mentions the tremendous values one can get and the amount of nutrition that is in these products. There is another article which mentions our affluent society and the person who stops at a hotel on the way home for a few bottles of beer instead of having supper. There is a reference to fortifying beer to ensure that a person who consumes it will get the proper nourishment.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Whelan:** Perhaps this is a good idea. I do not know why members of the New Democratic Party applauded this. Their economists will tell them that people in organized labour have always been able to keep ahead of the cost of living. I might say that I am sure members of the New Democratic Party are aware that they receive most of their support from organized labour. I want to point out that the amount of money a person spends or earns does not necessarily mean that the nutrition he obtains from the food he buys or the beer he drinks will be such that he will be a healthy person. We hear much about what we should be doing and what is being done in some other countries.

Let me compare the cost of food in some of the other countries which have a standard of living similar to ours, and one or two with a standard of living much less than ours. In the United Kingdom, about 28 cents out of every dollar is spent on food. In the United States, about 19 cents out of every dollar is spent on food. The situation here is similar to the situation in the United States. I am told that at the present time the cost of food to the Canadian consumer is a little lower than it is to the consumer in the United States. In a country such as India, 60 cents out of every dollar is spent on food. Then, we might consider the situation in Sweden, a country to which many people like to refer as an example when suggesting how people should live and drink. They always point out that it is Utopia.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Whoever said that?

**Mr. Whelan:** It used to be quite popular for members of your party to point out that Sweden had the type of environment every man should have.

[Mr. Whelan.]

**Mr. Benjamin:** How does that make it a Utopia?

**Mr. Whelan:** Well, I did not know the hon. member would admit he was not speaking of a Utopia when he mentioned the philosophy of his party. Let us make a few comparisons with Sweden and the way of life in that country. Dealing first with food prices for their standard of living, they are among the highest in the world.

• (1730)

**An hon. Member:** It must be the highest standard of living in the world.

**Mr. Whelan:** It is not any higher than ours. I quote from this article in the *Globe and Mail* of Thursday, May 25, as follows:

Food prices being the world's highest, it is all they can afford—especially since Swedes drink more hard liquor (at \$12 a fifth for Scotch) than anyone else in the world.

The heading of the article is "Price of affluence is mental illness, Sweden told" and it has a subheading "Achievements in welfare, chilling aspects of 1984." It continues:

This is the reality of modern Sweden, Europe's most affluent country, where a recent psychiatric report commissioned by the government confirms the image of a harsh and ruthless society which asks its citizens to sacrifice their mental well being by working ever harder to pay for exorbitantly priced apartments, a car, television repairs and two weeks on a packaged holiday if they can afford it—and many can't.

The sombre study was prepared by Dr. Hans Lohman, one of Sweden's top experts in psychiatry. It was commissioned by parliament because of spiralling health costs as the number of in-patients admitted to mental hospitals spiralled from 73,000 in 1969 to 83,000 in 1970.

They could not stand the high cost of their high standard of living.

The report stated that the number of out-patients was considerably higher in a country with only 8,000,000 inhabitants.

In his effort to maintain Sweden's high living standards, the worker is called upon by the country's technocrats to be competitive; and feels ashamed if he cannot keep up and "do his duty," Dr. Lohman said.

More and more citizens in fact cannot keep up as the planners demand even higher economic growth to pay the cost of looking after those who faltered along the way. But as the dropouts increase, more growth is needed, which results in more dropouts—and so on, the report stated.

The role of the Swedish woman is far more difficult—

I am sure the hon. member who proposed the motion will be interested in this article.

**Mrs. MacInnis:** I am listening.

**Mr. Whelan:** It continues:

—is far more difficult than her husband's and probably impossible, the report continued. Many urban women have fulltime jobs in Sweden because their husbands' pay cannot meet prices in the world's second most expensive and heavily taxed country.

But at the same time she is expected to comfort cranky children when she comes home from work, provide tasty meals, clean the house and then be a good bedtime partner. Experts believe the typical young married couple make love as seldom as twice a month, if the statistics are to be believed. They think it is because the women are simply too tired, and perhaps the men, too.