

response to rising food costs of people who are already living on a guaranteed annual income.

One thing that the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) suggested was that Senators should not contribute to the committee because of their experience. That is something that disturbs me as a businessman who came here to do what I can. Is he suggesting that I should hide whatever experience I have simply because I am a businessman? Farmers come here and speak on behalf of the interests of farmers, and I think that is legitimate. I do not think there is anything wrong with having people who are well motivated and trusted by their colleagues speaking on a matter of which they have experience. They would lend balance to such a committee.

Some of the things happening in this House, Mr. Speaker, are quite remarkable. I have never been in a minority government, yet some of the things we are able to do now in a spirit of co-operation and, incidentally, of survival on both sides are amazing to me. As a supporter of the government, I am delighted at the haste with which we are getting some things done, things that we could not get done when we were in a majority position. In fact, there is an advantage to being in a minority House.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) spoke earlier in the debate. I am always delighted to speak after her, Mr. Speaker, because she makes a unique contribution to this House. Up until this time she was the lone representative of the so-called weaker sex and I am delighted that we are now joined by other women who have a great contribution to make to this House. I always thought that it was a great weakness in the last parliament that it had only one, even though a very capable spokesman for the women's point of view, because in a debate of this nature when we are speaking about food costs, that point of view is most important. As is the case when speaking on abortion, it is very difficult for a man to go through it.

The hon. member's suggestion was a constructive one—it was repeated by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville—having to do with a prices review board. This is the sort of thing that will get to the guts of the problem. I think this is a progressive, though not a Progressive Conservative, suggestion. It is the type of thing we must do and to which the committee will bend its efforts.

• (2030)

If we look at the beginning of the Manitoba experience when they published the producer price and the retail price, we will recognize the gap between them. A lot of questions will be asked about that. As well motivated as farmers and businessmen are, it does not help to have someone looking over our shoulders all the time. The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway overlooked the fact that pension increases are and will be tied to the rising cost of living. I think the committee should investigate the Swedish experience which the hon. member mentioned, as well as the United States experience. This is something which we all must consider.

We have avoided wage and price controls in this country. We have a good record in containing inflation relative to other nations, but still I think we must watch the American experience in this respect. It is true that con-

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trols have all but been lifted, but they have had an interesting impact on rising inflation. If prices start to rise now, it will indicate that controls are really not very effective. This is a situation which we might watch carefully.

I was interested to hear the hon. member for Perth-Wilmot (Mr. Jarvis) make his distinguished speech. He appears to be a distinguished Member of Parliament following a member who had a distinguished career on this side of the House. I wish the new member for Perth-Wilmot a distinguished and short career as well.

There is nothing magic in this situation, Mr. Speaker. In the last parliament the finance committee studied interest rates, but this time we really want to study the full question of inflation. We know that there are no magic solutions. We could say that this is a sort of motherhood operation, but no one except the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway has offered suggestions as to what might be done. I think we have a responsibility in this House to look at those suggestions. Even if it were only educational, I think we would all want to know the answers and know that the right questions are being asked of the right people in the committee.

One cannot isolate food costs from all the other factors which create inflation—the psychology, the effect of wages, the effect of dividends and the return on investment. Things we do not have time to deal with in this House can be dealt with in detail in committee. We gentlemen in this House are not as familiar with this subject as are our wives. Just about 50 per cent of the married people in this country are women!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danson: I would like to keep it that way, Mr. Speaker. Food prices are highly visible and are reflected every day in the household budget. Women spend the highest percentage of our incomes and it is very important that they be given an opportunity to sit on this committee and to appear before it. In that sense it is a motherhood resolution because they are the people most deeply concerned.

There are many cost factors that we will have to consider in the committee. There is the question of consumer selection—"shopping" is the old-fashioned word. It will be my thirtieth wedding anniversary in a week or two, Mr. Speaker. We have raised four sons—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danson: That is on February 6, Mr. Speaker; and I believe it is the money anniversary, if any hon. members are sending gifts. I do not mean to get syrupy about it, but it has not been an easy thing to raise a young family. It was easier for me than for my wife. When she is shopping and lamb chops are expensive, she buys pork chops; and when they are too expensive, then she might buy cut-up chicken. It is not so terrible—

An hon. Member: What about boloney?

Mr. Danson: Boloney is not too bad. Its price will go down; with so many new members on the Conservative benches it should be in oversupply.