

*Emergency Powers Act*

required to bring consumer price levels down to a fair level out of new purchasing power created for that purpose by the government's own agencies and spent into circulation rather than lent.

In order to stabilize Canadian prices in the situation we now face, we Social Crediters urge the government that in the bill to be brought in following this resolution consideration be given to the immediate imposition of these six points. We believe that they constitute a program that would take care of the price situation fairly well. In the first place, we believe that it would be necessary to impose over-all price and wage controls. I am persuaded somewhat by the argument of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart that there exists already a certain amount of wage control in that certain contracts have been made covering periods up to two years. Following the first step I have suggested there should be an adjustment of prices to ensure a fair profit, and an adjustment of wages to bring them into conformity with the adjusted price level.

The third step should be the bringing of farm prices into parity with the adjusted price level. Farmers have often been accused of taking more than their share out of the cost of food products, particularly during the past year or two. They have been blamed for the high prices of meat, eggs, milk, butter, cheese and any number of things, but an examination of the facts will disclose that during the period since the war farm income has not kept pace with rising costs of the things the farmer has to buy. It has been established recently that the farm population of this country received no more than 15 per cent of the national income when it composes at least 25 per cent of the total population of the country. That is not parity. The farmer has been squeezed between pyramiding costs and the more or less controlled prices of his production. Something must be done for this very important part of our population. I can think of no better way to do this than to establish a parity relationship between the prices of farm products and the prices of things the farmer has to buy.

The fourth important step that should be taken is the adoption of a system of consumer subsidies in order to maintain the purchasing power of the low income groups so they may be able to buy the necessities of life. These subsidies should be paid as far as possible out of new purchasing power and when it is necessary to expand the purchasing power of the country, rather than to go to the chartered banks to borrow.

The fifth important point to consider would be the rationing of commodities in short supply whose production cannot be increased.

That is the only fair way of seeing that all people get their fair share of things in short supply. We know that people do not like rationing, and I hope it will not be necessary during this period ahead; but if it is let us have a program that is fair, just and equitable.

The sixth important point to consider is the giving of every possible encouragement to increasing the production of wanted goods, stressing particularly those things which are necessary for our protection and for total preparedness. It would be tragic if we got into a period of global war and found that we had not induced the production of many things which we could produce but which were found to be in short supply and which could not be obtained from other parts of the world. We think that this six-point program would help Canadians through any difficult period that might be ahead with a minimum dislocation of their economy and with a minimum of suffering.

Let me conclude by offering two simple warnings to the government. I think it can truthfully be said that whenever in the past it has been found necessary to centralize power in the central government in order to meet an emergency there has been a tendency to make at least some part of the program permanent. We should guard against that. The centralization process is the negation of true democracy. We ought to be careful to see to it that whatever powers are transferred—I am thinking now particularly of the transfer of powers from the provincial to the dominion jurisdiction—they ought to be fully returned when the emergent situation has passed. We should not wait too long because such things have a habit of indurating to the point of fixation.

The second point is that it may be necessary for the government to set up boards in this system of controls to meet the emergency. Everybody hates the thought of boards, bureaux, and all that sort of thing, but we cannot seem to get along without some of them at any rate. Let me appeal to the Prime Minister and the government in this way. Whatever boards we find it necessary to set up, let us get good men to fill those positions rather than dictators. The quality of the men whom we put on those boards will determine largely whether or not the public will accept the whole program that has to be imposed. Surely any man who has the interests of his fellow man at heart, any man who has the confidence of the people, is above reproach and is fair in all that he does, would be the kind of man to fill a position on one of these boards.

Let us be careful not to get men who, by their dictatorial methods, will not be able to