

ence and, of course, is distasteful to many. It is also fraught with the danger that, in the long run, this would result in prices rising still more as dealers could readily, in view of such instability, transfer their business or dealings outside Canada.

Therefore, this reaction from the public is quite justified, because they feel they are being exploited to a certain extent by dealers or by methods likely to increase prices. Well, the retailer is not necessarily the one who makes the biggest profit with these prices which have reached an intolerable level.

I expect a lot from this committee and so does the consumer.

I admit that all the problems we have had during the last few years, though they were expected, could not be avoided. As a matter of fact, I wonder whether this committee will reach the objective and I hope it will get into action without delay, and make recommendations so that the minister may take efficient steps to prevent this increase. And I think that the solution we are looking for and that no one has found to date is to bring prices back to a reasonable level on par with consumer income.

I suggest that this is our aim. And of course this will require much co-operation from all hon. members and understanding between parties. We will have to aim at a common objective for the sake of society rather than restrict ourselves to criticism. I admit nevertheless that each hon. member tried to make his own contribution. Perhaps some hon. members showed too much partisanship but, in general, I suggest that they have tried, by giving their views, to find a solution likely to safeguard the consumers' interests.

I therefore hope that the committee, in view of the difficulties which we know, will bring something positive to consumers. And the greatest deception which could befall consumers would be that the committee, which is now being publicized in every newspaper, and that study, which is being made by Parliament, would have no aftermath, for the consumer still has great hopes. Yet that is what would happen were the committee to confine itself to recommendations which would not result in efficient measures.

● (2140)

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, even at the best of times, even when there is no inflation, unemployment or poverty the price of anything is always too high in the opinion of some people and too low in the opinion of others. To the farmer, for example, the market price of his produce is always too low and the wages he has to pay his hired hands are always too high. To the hired hand the wages he receives are always too low and the prices of the groceries he must buy are always too high. It seems that even in the best of times no one is ever satisfied, but that is human nature. Because we do not live in the best possible circumstances but live at a time and place in which the government has been causing considerable inflation, unemployment, and poverty, the Canadian people are highly dissatisfied, and rightly so.

Food Prices

Last month in a debate in this House I mentioned some of the ways in which a government can cause unemployment and poverty. The Canadian people are completely justified in complaining about these policies and demanding the eviction of the government that sustains them. The Canadian people are also very upset about this government's inflating the money supply to fill its budget deficits and thereby causing a terrible inflation of prices which affects not only the price of food but also the prices of land and housing and in fact of all consumer goods. During the housing debate, when the rising prices of land and housing were discussed I put the blame for the paper money inflation where it belongs, on the federal government and its Bank of Canada. But this government does not listen and it continues to inflate the money supply, as evidenced by the Bank of Canada's own figures in its weekly financial statistics.

Both parties of the coalition government say that they want to force manufacturers to disclose more information about their products. Perhaps the government should print a disclosure on its own paper money which would warn the holder that its future value is questionable. Perhaps some hon. members think I am not serious when I warn of the dangers that lie ahead on the government's course of paper money inflation. These hon. members should study history. Then they would see what disasters paper money inflation has brought. One example is the destruction of the French economy after the paper money inflation that began in 1789. The collapse into chaos led to the rise of Napoleon who, despite all his vices, learned from the very conditions that brought him to power never to tamper with the soundness of his country's money, which was gold coin. More recently we saw the destruction of the German economy after the paper money inflation of 1923. The collapse into chaos and the rise of Hitler who, like Napoleon, unfortunately enjoyed the support of the people because the people considered even these dictators preferable to the chaos that followed the paper money inflation and economic collapse.

Genuine Conservatives can rarely find points of agreement with Lord Keynes, but I have found one. In 1919 Keynes wrote:

There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose.

A similar remark was attributed to Lenin to the effect that the best way to destroy the capitalist system is to debauch the currency. We must learn from history. We must stop this paper money inflation before we too relive the disasters of the past.

This is part of the problem of high and rising food prices. The other part of the problem is monopoly. Before I say very much about this I should perhaps define the word because many people are confused about its meaning. Lord Coke's definition of monopoly is most clear. He said:

Monopoly is a grant of special privilege by the state, reserving a certain area of production to one particular individual or group.

In a paper entitled "1776 to 1984: The Decline and Resurgence of Monopoly", Yale Brozen, professor of business