

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I must point out to the hon. member that this motion is not debatable and that he cannot proceed with any statement unless the motion be first withdrawn.

Motion (Hon. Mr. Doherty) agreed to.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN: Orders of the Day have to be called first.

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Orders.

On Government Orders being called, Mr. Proulx rose to speak on the Address in reply to the speech of the Governor General.

Mr. CURRIE: Before proceeding with Government Orders—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Prescott has the floor.

Mr. DOHERTY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might offer an explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Only with the unanimous consent of the House is it competent for the minister to intervene. Under Government Orders we have arrived at the debate upon the Address and the member for Prescott has the floor. Is it the unanimous consent of the House that the Minister of Justice should have an opportunity to make his explanation?

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK: Mr. Speaker, may I call your attention to the fact that you have not called Orders of the Day?

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion which was made by the Minister of Justice automatically superseded the Orders of the Day, and we have now arrived at the debate on the Address. Has the minister the unanimous consent of the House to make the explanation which he desires to give?

The House gave unanimous consent.

Mr. DOHERTY: I only desire to mention especially for the information of the hon. member (Mr. Currie) that the Minister of Militia is unfortunately not here to-day, he desiring to attend the funeral of a relative, and that the hon. member will realize that through courtesy his matter might have stood in any event.

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Consideration of the motion of Mr. Howard Primrose Whidden for an Address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, resumed from Friday, September 5.

Mr. EDMOND PROULX (Prescott): When the debate was adjourned the other

[Mr. J. A. Currie.]

day, Mr. Speaker, I had finished discussing the matters mentioned in the Address. One of those the Treaty of Peace and was about to deal with domestic matters, although they are not mentioned in the Address but they are matters which I consider of supreme importance such as the cost of living. Last session the Government tried to solve this problem by creating a Board of Commerce, and since the session they have appointed the members of this board. There has been much delay on the part of the Government, however, so far as any effective action is concerned, and far from prices having decreased since last session they have increased. The board has not begun to work seriously. One of its first experiences was the discovery that prices of foodstuffs in this country were far too high, higher than the cost of materials warranted. The board was in session the other day at Winnipeg, and the chairman discovered that at that place American bacon was selling at 4½ cents cheaper than the Canadian product, after duty and freight had been paid from Duluth to Winnipeg. I have a despatch from Winnipeg dated September 12 to the Ottawa Citizen which reads:

"I do not see the justification in bacon at 65 and 70 cents a pound," declared Judge H. A. Robson, chief commissioner of the board of commerce, under the Combines and Fair Prices Act, at to-day's session. Evidence had been adduced showing that the cost price of bacon sold at those prices was 54 cents a pound, the 70 cent price being for sliced bacon.

Figures showing that bacon bought from Armour's in Duluth was four and a half cents cheaper laid down in Winnipeg, despite necessity of paying duty, freight, exchange and all incidental expenses, than the product from the local packers, in a lower grade, and one and five-eighths cents cheaper in a higher grade were produced by John Guest, manager of a large departmental store, meat market. The shipment from Duluth was made recently and was an experiment. The statement was filed as an exhibit.

We can see therefore that in the past the Canadian packers have charged the people of this country excessive prices for meat, and I think that this is a matter which the Government should have remedied. If in the last budget they had removed the duty from foodstuffs, and especially from meat, this would have been an efficacious step in the direction of reducing the cost of living. We requested them to do so. My hon. friend from Brome (Mr. McMaster) had a motion asking the Government to remove the duty on foodstuffs but no heed was paid to this urgent appeal, because my hon. friends opposite had no desire to hurt their friends the packers, and the result is that those duties