

*Food Prices Committee*

matter at a more leisurely pace; they may take their time in proceeding with the study because they have all kinds of time and connections. I wonder whether those two statements are not somewhat contradictory.

Our party has other reasons for being suspicious and for not wanting members of the Senate to be on the committee. First and foremost, members of the other place are not democratically elected by the people of this country. I believe that is a very important point which we should make. I hope that the members of the Conservative party, when others of us in this House move for abolition of the other place, will support us with the same enthusiasm as that with which they apparently moved this amendment. I am sure the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is fully expecting their support when his motion comes up for debate later this session.

• (2020)

In the next two or three minutes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to two or three matters which I think will throw a little light upon some of the members of the other place and why it might be preferable not to have them on this committee. I quote a short paragraph from the December issue of *Saturday Night* magazine as follows:

Among themselves they share 180 corporation directorships and 53 senior executive positions. Eight of them are bank directors.

Many of them are also interested in the food industry. Many of them sit on the boards of directors of some of the food companies, or have interests in industries associated with food. We have Senator Beaubien, who is involved in the Dominion Sugar Company. Senator Desruisseaux is involved in Melchers Distilleries Ltd., Lucky One Beverages Inc., Standard Brands Ltd., and Canadian Cocoa and Chocolate Co. Senator Gélinas is involved in John Labatt Ltd., Montreal Refrigerating and Storage Ltd., the Canadian Salt Co. Ltd., the Ogilvie Flour Mills Co. Ltd., Distillers Corporation and Seagram Ltd. Then we have Senator Hayden, who is involved in Atlantic Sugar Refineries Co. Ltd., Acadia-Atlantic Sugar Co., Canadian Tuna Co. Ltd., Atlantic Fish Processors Ltd., and Scott's Restaurants Co. Ltd. Then there is Senator McLean, who is involved in Seal Cove Canning Ltd., Quoddy Seafoods Ltd., and Craft Canning Co. Ltd. There is Senator Molson, who I understand has some interest in Molson Industries Ltd., and Senator Robichaud who is involved in National Sea Products Ltd. These people do have an interest in food prices but they do not have the same interests as the average constituent, the farmers and consumers who live in my riding.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I appeal to this House to get on with its work, to study the increase in the cost of food, and to remember that the farmer is not responsible for that increase any more than the average worker employed in the industry who is not reaping the cream of the crop in terms of the increase in food prices. I hope we soon get down to work and study the conglomerate structure of the food industry, food transportation costs and promotion, advertising and packaging costs. It is in the middleman that I am sure the House and anyone interested in studying the increase in the cost of food will find the culprit.

[Mr. Nystrom.]

**Mr. Barnett J. Danson (York North):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate in this debate and, it being my first opportunity to speak in this parliament, I would like to congratulate you on your unanimous re-election. Those who previously served in this House gained the greatest respect for you, Sir; and I may warn new members that behind that velvet exterior lies a mailed fist.

I should also like to congratulate Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I congratulate parliament on the precedent it set, not only in drawing the Deputy Speaker from the official opposition but on the quality of the individual selected. He is a man I have been privileged to serve with. He knows I am not put down easily and I may tell him that from previous experience he should know that, like the bishop's wife, I will try harder each time. That is a local joke between the Deputy Speaker and myself. We were once seated with a bishop of a diocese that will remain unnamed. His wife was with him and she mentioned that she was his second wife. I told her that being number two, she would have to try harder.

I appreciate the introductory remarks of the minister who put the problem and the reasons for setting up the committee in their proper context. I also appreciate the comments of my colleague from Bruce (Mr. Whicher) who was most forceful and interesting in his remarks regarding the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence). Incidentally, I wish to congratulate the latter, (a) for being in order and (b) for keeping us alert. I have heard of the cut and thrust of debate in the provincial house and I am pleased to see that it is being brought here.

The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham stated the problems. Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any great trick to stating the problems. We all know what the problems are. Then he demanded action, but I never heard from him what his party's suggestions were. This is the quality of the opposition which wants to take over government simply because it wants to form a government. It is a highly commendable ambition. That is why we are here—we want to form a government too, but I would suggest that we do it with constructive suggestions.

The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham wanted action. He criticized the government and then he said he would support the establishment of the committee, with certain conditions. At that stage he began to get interesting. I thought he was going to come up with some intelligent suggestions. But what were these great conditions, Mr. Speaker? They were procedural. They had nothing to do with the cost of food. Of all things, they were procedural. He was disturbed because it was to be a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons—a joint committee because it was to be made up of members of this joint and members of the other joint.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Danson:** I think that is a commendable thing. We are dealing with a very fundamental problem, but I do not believe this is the way to face it. We should not be debating the role of the Senate in this connection. Incidentally, it is a role with which they themselves continually struggle. I think it would be extremely valuable to have the contribution of Senators, because we want to know the