

of all controls. When asked to say when and where he said, "Let us be frank and honest about it." I would say that he is the first one who should take his own advice. Let me tell him now that, to my knowledge, this party and its leader have never advocated the abolition of all controls. Some individual members of our party have done so, certainly, but what this party advocated, and what it did pass a resolution about at an annual meeting some two years ago, was "the immediate abolition of all controls on the products of the farm and ranch". That is quite different from the abolition of all controls. If the government had taken that course in their decontrol policy I believe the whole country would be much better off at the present time. Instead, however, they did just the opposite, and took off practically all controls except those on prices of agricultural products. A great many of our present difficulties have been the result.

Most of the outcry about the rapid increase in living costs has been over the rise in food prices. I suppose this is only natural, because we all have to think of our stomachs and what goes into them at least three times a day. I fear that a considerable number of urban workers blame the high food prices on the greed of the farmers and think that at the present time the farmers are getting too much, without knowing the true situation. It is noteworthy that no one in this house, to my knowledge, and no business or labour leader throughout the country has maintained that the farmer is getting too much. The fact, known to all well-informed persons, is that the farmers are not getting their fair proportion of the national income. If, then, we accept, as I think we must, the fact that the farmer is not getting enough, it follows that prices for farm products are too low rather than too high in comparison with farm costs. Where, then, is the remedy? I believe it is in the bringing down of farm costs, and in lessening the spread between the price the farmer receives and the price the consumer pays.

Farm costs can be brought down in several ways. The first is by increasing production; but the policies of this government have been such as to reduce production rather than to increase it. Farmers have not known where they stand or what the situation is likely to be in the future. They have been at the mercy, as far as prices are concerned, of the Minister of Agriculture and the whims and fancies of this government and its so-called expert advisers. As a result, they have been afraid of the future, afraid to expand their production in many lines. Let me give an example. I happen to be raising some hogs, and have

determined that I can raise five hundred for considerably less per hog than I can raise fifty, and I am taking means to obtain that number. At the same time nearly all my neighbours have been liquidating their hogs. They say to me, "You are taking a terrible gamble. The way Gardiner has been fiddling around with prices of livestock and coarse grains, I would not touch a proposition like yours with a ten-foot pole." That is just an example which illustrates quite well, I think, the lack of confidence that prevails among our farmers at the present time, and, as a result, their unwillingness to plan for increased production. I may add that I am going ahead because, unlike the man whose letter the minister read just before Christmas, and who said he had confidence in God and Gardiner, I have confidence that God and the Canadian people will not permit the Liberal government to continue to mangle agriculture and the whole Canadian economy very much longer.

Another way in which farm costs can be brought down is by the reduction or abolition of the sales tax and other indirect taxes on the things farmers must buy in order to produce. If a farmer buys a truck today several hundred dollars of the cost is due to indirect taxes and the mark-up of these taxes which causes them to pyramid. That money, must, of course, be recovered from the consumer through increased prices. If such farm costs were eliminated farm products could be sold at lower prices and still leave the farmer better off than he is at the present time. Similarly, a reduction in indirect taxes would lessen the spread between the farmers' price and the consumers' price.

These remedies are open to the government now. No committee is required to examine into them and take up several months while nothing is done. If the government wishes to bring down food prices let it put into operation policies which will restore the confidence of the farmers and thus increase production. Let it remove or reduce some of the indirect taxes and thus reduce farmers' cost and price spreads. Let it prosecute profiteers, if it can find any. Surely, with all the resources of men and machinery in the various government departments and agencies, and with the mounted police, they can uncover profiteering much better than a committee of this house. The government already has the power to do this, and to take the necessary punitive measures.

There is one other step the government could take as a temporary measure to relieve immediate hardship. That is, to pay subsidies, on a limited number of essential foods, to