

Canadian Economy

a worthwhile initiative. Some hon. members used to say: we cannot meet so and so; we never meet anybody.

Those parliamentary committees give precisely the opportunity not only to enquire from the minister but also to question the government's policies. If that is not done, the responsibility cannot be laid upon the government; it has to be laid upon anyone not taking part in the committee proceedings. Some of us members do not participate for different reasons. There are a few who prefer to participate here, and this is within their rights. It should at least be acknowledged that not only do members and ministers responsible for various programs participate in committee proceedings, but there are also thousands of witnesses who appear before the various committees to testify.

To still the fears of the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), let me point out that when the tax reform act was introduced, there was for three years and half a great deal of participation by the hon. members who took the time to study it. The result was a substantial bill about which people were able to discuss and not only express their concerns, but also change what they wanted to change by bringing well-prepared resolutions before the committees and putting arguments forward, and in several cases, they were accepted. So, Mr. Speaker, nobody should say that there is no government, that there is no participation and no cooperation.

Last week, we adopted the anti-inflation bill, which is considered today by the Senate, before which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) is now appearing. I see that for some reason, Social Crediters are suggesting that this bill should not have been introduced, but until now I did not find in their speeches any alternate solution.

I noted several points on which I shall come back later, but I did not notice any alternative. I want to deal later on with some of the recommendations.

I understood that this was almost illegal, that regulations would be drafted, that a board would be established and that this would not even be legal. Also, I understood that it would be impossible for members of the House to review the legislation. I think that it is a great disservice not to have read the bill or what was said. That exercise will take place in Parliament, if required by members of Parliament. I think this should have been pointed out, but maybe some of my colleagues forgot.

I should like to talk about leadership. Most members of the Social Credit Party of Canada come from eastern Canada, but there was no direct intervention regarding energy. This matter was not raised during the debate. It seems to me that it is to show leadership to allow the people of eastern Canada to benefit from direct state intervention in the economy through legislation and to provide them all with gas or heating oil at lower cost, at a price lower than the world price.

Now, I hear comments right and left. It is a matter of \$4 less. The balance of forces may have something good. To some members, that may not mean much. Indeed, 33½, 40 per cent may not mean anything to them, but I feel that to allow a price 40 per cent lower than the world price requires a direct participation in the economy. Oil companies do not expect that, Mr. Speaker, that is for sure. Many have come and made representations and are still doing so.

[Mr. Trudel.]

After hearing the remarks of the member for Athabaska (Mr. Yewchuk), I know that he certainly does not want anyone to dwell on this matter. With regard to his province, this afternoon he made a kind of a sermon on the mount. He spoke of the intervention of the government with regard to those companies. So, there should be some sort of a balance between the arguments that have been heard until now.

When the Food Prices Review Board was set up, some companies were required to produce facts. That is direct intervention. That was not appreciated either. Subsidies were granted to bread and milk producers. Now, that is intervention and leadership. You will not find that in very many countries, Mr. Speaker. But we had it here in Canada and it has been forgotten, or skimmed over very lightly, in an effort not to dwell on what has been done.

With regard to the milk industry in particular, we on this side have heard the representations that were made from every corner opposite. Not only was the government asked to take action, which it did, but it was asked to intervene to a far greater extent than it did. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, both claims cannot not be made at one and the same time, namely that there is government intervention that costs money and redistributes wealth and, in the same breath, that there is no such intervention. Perhaps it would be better to go on to something else.

The exercise that fascinated me the most, Mr. Speaker, was in fact what was said about the year 2000.

● (1730)

The hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin) made extraordinary projections. What struck me most at the very beginning of his remarks, was that he at least admitted that in this country where there is a government intervention, the average family income is \$14,000. I may have missed something somewhere along the line, Mr. Speaker, but I think that as far as resources or structures are concerned, our country ranks second in the world. Even if it ranked only third or fourth, it would be quite good.

The government's responsibility is broader than that. This does not mean that everyone is earning this much or more. I think the government insisted on this, but it was in the spirit of the anti-inflation bill to ensure that people who cannot get along are given some attention. In order to achieve that, the economy had to be reviewed, and that is what the government did. This may be distressing to my honourable friends over there, I would not know. But if they are taken aback, I wish I could know because we have to help those who cannot help themselves. That was said by an honourable member earlier, and I think everybody in this House believes it. However, we must also restrain the abuses which befalls our society, whether they are ascribable to the government, to the companies or to the unions.

Now, if one of these areas is deprived of certain powers, we may be sure that we will hear about it sooner or later, Mr. Speaker. We saw it in the parliamentary committee which sat on that matter. Certain companies or groups of people are absolutely opposed to the government taking any decision. The more you look at it, the more intervention there is, and the less I understand the motion put forward today.