

Because of this, the Social Credit party has long been advocating legislation entirely in contradiction with the philosophy of the old parties which have been succeeding each other over the past 100 years, namely compensated discount to be granted to consumers through the dealer with reimbursement guaranteed by the government. This program is contrary to price and salary controls in that it leaves the consumer free to purchase where he will and the dealer free to participate or not to the program. Moreover, this compensated discount program would allow the government to take direct action relative to prices.

Mr. Speaker, that is a scientific economic project worthy of examination. To my great regret, once again the government is about to set up a task force to study studies carried out by other task forces, all of which will result in more reports which will sit on shelves, without any positive recommendation being brought forward.

• (1640)

Under the influence of the New Democratic Party, they will propose controls over prices and salaries.

Through the backward policy of the old political parties, the consumer today is caught in a vise and unable to participate in production. As for the merchant, he must in turn face price increases, wage increases, taxes on capital gains, so that the businessman, the industrialist and the private sector are also trapped in a vise. This is why we say that we are heading more and more toward a socialist system.

But, Mr. Speaker, I shall oppose with all my strength any control over prices and salaries in Canada because, having observed the course of this debate, I realize very clearly that this will be one of the findings of the committee's report and I fully intend to keep on proposing in this House a compensated discount.

The compensated discount, as I summed it up a moment ago, is a concrete step. Nothing is forced upon anyone and price increases are directly affected. Those dealers who want to opt out may do so. However, they will have to face a fair competition, because Social Credit respects and promotes the healthy and normal development of free enterprise in our country, that is private enterprise.

The dealer who chooses to join the compensated discount scheme can then give, according to the present economic conditions and the indications of the Minister of Finance, a discount up to 5 per cent for specific economic conditions.

Thus, any consumer is free to do business with a dealer who takes part in the compensated discount scheme or with another who does not. Moreover, the dealer is entirely free to accept or not the compensated discount program.

The consumer buying from a dealer who has joined the program will get a product at 5 per cent less. The consumer pays 5 per cent less for the product and the dealer files a claim with the government at the end of the month so as to compensate for his loss; thus the selling price of a product for the dealer taking part in the program is the same as for the dealer who has not joined it, except that in the case of the consumer there is a 5 per cent saving.

Food Prices Committee

Why is the government creating a committee to investigate consumer prices? It is precisely because they want to yap, to clamour from one ocean to another that prices are going up, that people's incomes do not enable them to buy those products, and that they are therefore getting into debt with finance companies that will take advantage of them through publicity by making them pay hidden interest rates.

Supermarkets are exploiting consumers as they create in their stores such an atmosphere that consumers cannot help buying. The consumer is also deceived by the false publicity as well as by middlemen between producers and consumers, so much that an item which should have cost very little in the first place is finally sold at an outrageous and abusive price because a whole series of middlemen took their share of profit without taking part in the production.

Mr. Speaker, if the government is aware of price increases and if in creating this third or fifth committee on prices it recognizes the failure of its earlier committees, I wonder whether it is trustworthy, serious and really sincere in its attempt at finding a solution. I wonder therefore why it would not consider, through the action of this committee, the possibility of using the Social Credit's scientific mechanism for prices, namely the consumer's compensated discount. The government would then show that it is responsible because, while respecting the freedom of the dealers, it would respect that of the consumers and would encourage a greater consumption. Consequently, production would have to be stepped up. Unemployment would be reduced and free enterprise would be respected. For once, it would get some encouragement from the government.

Mr. Speaker, we of the Social Credit party of Canada have taken a vote earlier in favour of an amendment designed to increase the membership of this committee from 20 to 25, because when there was a membership of 20 our party had only one representative on this committee. By increasing that number to 25, we shall have two spokesmen who will surely propose to other committee members the adoption of a compensated discount scheme which is a logical, modern and advanced solution. Perhaps this is why it is so badly understood, too advanced as it is for the retrograded minds of the federal cabinets which have succeeded each other for many years.

Mr. Speaker, I appeal to the goodwill of my colleagues from all political parties that they have at least the moral earnestness to consider the proposed compensated discount before falling into the clutches of socialism with all its implications: a general control over prices and wages, impeding the rights of individuals and businesses in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we must never forget that the keystone of our economy and of our country is personal initiative, the development of the individual, his desire to progress, to improve his standard of living by taking part in a business by his work or otherwise. The day when we finally achieve such a total control over prices and wages, for whatever period of time, we shall display moral dishonesty because there are many other positive and efficient solutions, like the compensated discount. Moreover, we shall hamper all, personal initiative.