

The world-wide scarcity of food and the oil crisis are the main causes of inflation, and we are aware of it. It is difficult for us to contain inflation due to external factors, but we will make every effort to alleviate its effects through measures likely to control that inflationary spiral.

To approach the problem in a simplistic way, as suggested by the opposition, would fail, judging by the results achieved in other countries. We saw what has just happened in England because of the measures advocated by the Conservative party. We saw the results of such a policy. As the hon. member for Bonaventures-Îles de la Madeleine (Mr. Béchard) pointed out, the same situation prevails in the United States.

● (2040)

We already know the results of those formulas advocated by Progressive Conservatives with respect to price controls.

The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) keeps on playing the same record across the country, that consumer prices must be frozen for 90 days, but without telling us for that matter what will happen on the 91st day.

It is also easy to say that farm production must be increased. Farm production is increased, and everything is fine. Food prices will come down significantly. That is another simplistic solution advocated by men who think that as in other industries, in the field of agriculture one can turn on the valve and shut it off when one feels like it. Agriculture is not an industry like the shoe industry. There are production and follow cycles. The hon. member who spoke before me, the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary (Mr. Whittaker) mentioned earlier that with beef production there is a cycle of at least three and a half years.

So one cannot put forward simplistic solutions like turning on the valve and shutting it off as needed. We should rather ask ourselves why farm producers neglected their production. Our governments forgot at times that the improved standard of living brought about by technological development was not shared by our farmers to the same extent as in other areas of industry. Farming must be given all the consideration it deserves and farmers must receive a fair retribution for their work. To that end, aggressive measures for the marketing of farm products are needed. We realize today that the agrifood industry is an important area of the Canadian economy.

I congratulate the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) on the agricultural impact in the speech from the throne. A food policy designed to increase the production of food products could make a fine headline in any daily paper. But if we go over all the agricultural measures the House will be asked to consider concerning grains and farm credit, guaranteed loans designed to update farm equipment, with regard to the transportation and marketing of farm products, the construction of cold storage facilities and concerning amendments to the legislation on the import and export of farm products, we realize the importance of that situation.

Our agricultural program is very clear in the speech from the throne, and I quote:

The Address—Mr. M. Roy

It is clear that this country's production must be increased. The Government is developing a policy on food based on the following objectives:

—an adequate and dependable supply of quality food for a growing population in Canada enjoying a rising standard of living;

—reasonable food prices:

—for the consumer, in not requiring an undue proportion of income for Canadians to secure a sufficient and balanced diet;

That is the objective of the Agricultural Products Marketing Act. The duty of the National Farm Products Marketing Council is to try to ensure farm producers a reasonable income to keep the investments in their industry and to avoid those sharp changes in price which the consumers are facing today.

Mr. Speaker, 18 months have gone by before the passing of that legislation because the Progressive Conservative party was then filibustering.

In the Speech from the Throne, we can read and I quote:

—for the producer, in providing a return adequate to encourage production of food items which can be economically and efficiently produced in Canada;

—a continuing supply and—

There is the importance that was given to the agricultural situation and when we listen to the speeches of hon. members opposite we see that they have not even had either the courage or the decency to be objective concerning the farming industry.

Agriculture is engaged in an accelerated modernization process and it has reached a stage where old prejudices are out of place as well as the indifference or the ignorance of city dwellers who sometimes worry about the appropriations granted to the department of Agriculture.

But because farmers were not making any profits on their investments in this field, they abandoned the farm. Quebec statistics prove it since in the last four years, 10,000 producers a year quit farming because they could no longer live off the farm.

Therefore, the advent of industrial farming, characterized by large size farms and the integration of a real farm production plant constitutes an inheritance that the new generation of farmers will accept with all the more enthusiasm that it will feel better understood by the other classes of society.

It must never be forgotten that agriculture is an important area of social and economic life; it is a dynamic factor which contributes to development and provides resources for it is at the same time producer and consumer.

In the area of urban affairs, as a representative of a riding in the second largest city in Quebec, I would not forgive myself for not speaking of the part of the Speech from the Throne dealing with urban policy and I quote:

... the Government is playing a vital role to achieve a more balanced pattern of urban growth and to increase the quality of life in our cities in co-operation with the provinces and municipalities. Improved means of public transportation are indispensable to the achievement of these urban goals...

Public transportation is a financial burden for all municipalities which cannot balance their budget, and I refer here to the Ottawa-Hull Regional Commission, the Laval Transportation Commission, and the Montreal Interurban Commission. Deficits pile up annually under