

press the government for the return of price controls on grains, feeds and feed ingredients, and the restoration of subsidies at the coming session of the House of Commons;

Therefore be it resolved that this 1947 convention of the British Columbia federation of agriculture commend our national body for this action and pledge our wholehearted support towards the realization of a powerful and effective protest campaign, and

Be it further resolved that, in order to strengthen and co-ordinate the campaign, regional conferences shall be called throughout the province as soon as possible, representatives—

And so on, with the idea of promoting that particular plan.

I think the members of this particular group and others have indicated quite clearly plenty of good reasons why this committee should not be set up—not because we object to committees, but because the committee will serve no purpose except that of taking up the time of the members. We believe that action is what is required now. I know there are a few people in the country who do not want controls. But, Mr. Speaker, in the old days when highwaymen and bandits were prevalent in some parts of the world the first government that attempted to control them and prevent them from preying on the peaceful public was considered to be a most radical government. The bandits felt they had the right to the kind of life they lived, the right to engage in their piratical activities. Even one of Kipling's poems, the Lament of the Border Cattle Thief, indicates the insult which the chief of the border band felt had been visited upon him because the British government refused to allow him and his tribe to prey on the peaceful farmers of the valley in his territory.

The beneficiaries of any system or plan of society—or lack of plan—complain when some privilege is taken from them. But, Mr. Speaker, at the present time the welfare of far too many of our Canadian citizens depends upon the action taken by this government and this parliament to permit a few people, who because of some historical events in their lives have now assumed positions in the economic world, to exercise control which this parliament should have.

I repeat that we see no good purpose to be served by this committee. We believe the government should get on with its job, as it has in some of the other instances I have mentioned during the course of my contribution to this debate.

Mr. G. H. CASTLEDEN (Yorkton): Mr. Speaker, today the Canadian people find themselves in a desperate situation. The proposal that a parliamentary committee be set up at this time reveals how little that fact is

appreciated by those in control in the government here. For the past two years we have been facing rapid rises in the cost of living, which have used up the entire income of the people and drained their last bit of savings. The steepest increases have taken place in the past ten months, and the point now has been reached where the income of the average Canadian breadwinner no longer buys the food, clothing, fuel and care which his family requires for a proper Canadian standard. Each week new prices are announced on basic goods—flour, bread, milk, clothing, shoes, fuel, including coal, wood and oil. Each month, with monotonous regularity, the family finds that its income will not cover the new costs. Every wage earner in Canada is facing the problem of a rapid decrease in the amount of necessary goods his cheque will buy.

Recently I received a petition from my constituency, in the form of a resolution, which with your permission I should like to read to the house:

Whereas the rising cost of living is making it impossible for us to buy the necessities of life in food, clothing, fuel and shelter for our families and ourselves;

And whereas wages and salaries do not keep up with these rising costs, and so our savings are being completely used up;

And whereas there appears to be nothing to stop these costs from going completely out of the reach of the people who need these goods, and will ultimately bring unemployment and depression;

Therefore we urge, in the strongest terms possible, that the authorities at Ottawa who control these policies take immediate steps to control prices of food, clothing, shelter and fuel, as basic necessities of life, until the production and supply of these things is adequate to meet the needs.

People who have some savings, or who are in a position to ask their employers for increased wages, are fortunately situated; but those who are on fixed wages, those who are in receipt of war pensions or old age pensions, and wage earners with no savings, are in a desperate situation. Today I think of people out on the prairies in the crop failure areas who have practically no income this year, and who find the cost of living most alarming. Their deep concern is, first, that no effective action seems to be taken, and, second, that there seems to be no ceiling to limit the cost of living. In vain they wait for some action by the government in Ottawa to halt this upward trend, but nothing appears to be done; on the contrary government action sometimes actually makes the situation worse.

Let me give one example to illustrate what I mean. Until last October the prices of coarse grains were controlled. Thus the cost of feeding poultry, beef, pork and mutton was