

Food Prices Committee

Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) state recently that the province of Saskatchewan is intensifying its production. I hope it does. But I suggest that socialism, regulations and controls are not the answer. We must encourage more production in the country. If we then keep a check on distribution costs, we might have lower prices.

Let me end where I began. It will be a sad thing for the Canadian consumer, with food shortage and world hunger as it is today, if this committee cannot bring about a lowering of food prices in this country within the next six months or a year, because the world shortage of food will not disappear that quickly.

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, judging from the tone of the comments of my friend to the right, it seems that this committee on food prices is off to a very bad start. It does not look as though any one of those members has any idea what to do about the rising cost of food, nor do they appear to have any faith in an investigation which might be of help.

I remember all the brave talk during the election campaign about how awful the Liberals were, and how the Conservatives would do something about bringing a downward trend in the cost of food. We are now starting off with a tough job before the committee, but even before it meets we are faced with all kinds of motions and speeches designed to frustrate its efforts. We hear all kinds of things about what we cannot do, about how hopeless the task is and how nothing will be done. I must conclude, sadly, that we are not to have a good start in this investigation.

When I first looked at the amendment of the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) I was almost inclined to go along with it as a rather good joke. I should like to know what the Conservative party means when it says it will not go along with the establishment of a joint committee of the House of Commons and the other place. I like a good joke and I would like to go along with it, but I must control myself. I think I must remind them of something they are always bringing to our attention and vote on the side of morality.

I listened very carefully to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and I certainly would not want to raise any question about other people's motives, because we should not do that. I hope he does not mind if I express a few suspicions. Perhaps I might be allowed to wonder aloud why they have moved this kind of motion. I ask them why they do not want members of the Senate to participate. They are not in favour of abolishing the Senate. Perhaps they think the Senate is overworked and they do not want to put these gentlemen to the difficulty of coming to the committee. With that in mind, perhaps they feel we should exclude members of the Senate out of solicitude for the other place.

My party takes the position that we do not need the Senate and we think it should be abolished. Therefore, when we have on occasion moved amendments excluding Senators from committees, we have been able to explain our position. I should like to know the reason which leads the Conservative Party to move a motion excluding members of the other place.

[Mr. Horner (Crowfoot).]

I hate to raise this question, but I do so only because my friends to the right have continually reminded us about the danger we get into when we associate with undesirables. I listened very carefully to hon. members to my right and took their remarks to heart because even at my age I do not want to be considered impure. I am not sure that some of my colleagues would not feel that by supporting an amendment of this kind they would become involved in some kind of incestuous relationship with our friends to the right. I do not know how they would look upon that lapse in purity.

I do not know how the Conservatives can explain a motion of this kind which sort of arouses the sympathy and support of members of the New Democratic Party, particularly considering the terrible socialists from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and, now, British Columbia. The woods are full of them! I do not know how these members will go back to their constituencies and explain this consorting with terrible socialists. The next thing we know, they will be moving an amendment to incorporate the Regina manifesto. I must hasten to add that this would not work because there is a Winnipeg declaration which supersedes that manifesto. I want to prevent hon. members to my right getting into that position.

An hon. Member: It is our motion. Put your vote where your mouth is.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Saltsman: You fellows are becoming such radicals that I do not wonder you want to exclude the other place from a committee of the House of Commons. I do not know what things are coming to.

Some hon. Members: Let's vote.

Mr. Nowlan: You are perpetuating this problem by your speech.

Mr. Saltsman: I am raising these questions only because I want you to help me out of the dilemma you have placed me in. You have placed before us a motion that kind of appeals to me, but I am wondering why you are changing your spots so quickly. I do not know why, and I have been asking myself why. You will have to excuse me if you think I have a suspicious mind, but the truth is that I have. I wonder whether we would have this amendment before us if the majority of the other place was Conservative rather than Liberal.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Saltsman: I would appreciate hearing from the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham, publicly or privately, as to whether his view would be changed if the circumstances were otherwise. My party has never been very fussy about the other place, but I happen to have been a member of the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Consumer Food Prices. To tell the truth, I was far more worried about the intention of the Conservatives on that committee to shaft anything we were attempting to do, than the Senate—much to my surprise.