

*Food Prices Committee*

salaries keep going up, and poverty exists among riches. Quite paradoxically, the price of commodities keeps rising, while the Canadian people are getting deeper and deeper into debt because they lack the purchasing power to buy them, and the government keeps taking that power away from them by picking their pockets and then, we are in a vicious circle.

Mr. Speaker, this committee the government proposes to appoint will have to report and make recommendations on the trends of food prices. There is no need to appoint a committee to do that. Every Canadian will agree with me that prices are going up. Therefore, there is no need to appoint a committee in order to determine the trend of prices because they are obviously going up. And I suppose that if the government is now making a further attempt by giving such responsibilities to that committee it is probably because the Young Commission, with all its studies that cost thousands of dollars, did not succeed in finding whether prices were going up or down.

It is indeed incredible that we should be satisfied with marking time and still ask ourselves whether prices are rising. Such studies will not give one cent more to any Canadian consumer, except to the officials travelling with the committee.

The second responsibility entrusted to that committee is to study the factors domestic and foreign which account for the trends of food prices.

Mr. Speaker, as concerns the factors likely to have a bearing on prices, no new information will crop up. If you consider the results of the Barber Commission on the prices of farming implements mentioned in his speech last night by the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert)—a report which has been shelved under a ten-inch thick layer of dust—you will find conclusions about the foreign and domestic factors that influence price increases.

If you go through the reports submitted by the Canadian Economic Council since its establishment, you will realize that the foreign and domestic factors of consumer price increases have been identified by that organization but here again these conclusions remain the bedside book of the Right hon. Prime Minister and of the Leader of the official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield). They do not go any further because the governments, Progressive Conservative or Liberal, of the last 100 years have been the main factors of price and salary increases through their policy which only results in depriving taxpayers of their purchasing power, thus creating an imbalance between consumption and production which only leads to more inflation.

Among the factors which influence consumer prices, one should consider indirect taxation instead of direct taxation, and particularly the sales tax on building materials which causes consumer prices to go up. One should also consider personal income tax which still reduces the purchasing power. What happens under such circumstances? The income of the Canadian citizen is subjected to all kinds of taxes and inevitably he is unable to buy the goods which he himself produced. Why? Because between production and consumption the governments always step in to reduce the purchasing power, but they never dare think one minute that perhaps they

[Mr. Fortin.]

should do the opposite in order to solve this problem, that is increase the individual purchasing power.

It is rather paradoxical that in spite of an overproduction in Canada, not only the findings of studies but even some members say that underconsumption exists because prices are too high. It is strange to find that everyone is playing around the real problem, but nobody attacks it.

Social Crediters have been laughed at for a long time because some said they were advocating a silly doctrine and intended to operate a money machine. Today all serious-minded people know that this is false. In explaining their doctrine, Creditistes have often indicated that the individual is the cornerstone of the economic system and that, inasmuch as the individual really takes part in the economic life of his country, it is soundly administered and the government truly achieves its end which is to make financially possible what is physically desirable for the Canadian citizen.

Mr. Speaker, the various succeeding governments always went in for getting more money from the taxpayers' pockets in order to finance countless government programs in social security, regional economic expansion or any other fields, thus reducing the taxpayers' purchasing power.

Given this fact and spiraling prices and wages, Social Crediters suggest two solutions. First, as the major problem is the lack of purchasing power it would be imperative to recommend the establishment of a guaranteed annual income for each citizen, whatever his situation, his language, his race or his religion so as to enable him to get his share of the national production and this without any rise in prices or in wages. Each and every one, according to his age and certain categories and taking into account the present economic situation, should be granted an income which will ensure not only that individual work is encouraged, but also that the individual has the financial means to take part in production and consumption by purchasing products on the market.

Mr. Speaker, ministers of finance gorge themselves with nice talk when they say that Canada has a very high national product. In his next budget speech, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) will tell that due to the good administration of the government, gross national product has once again increased by so much per cent. In the meantime however, the purchasing power of the consumer will also have been eroded, poverty will have increased and the administration of social security schemes will cost more and more. The wage-earner is heavily taxed in order that those who do not work may be given something and finally the economic wheel of our country is not turning well.

We therefore propose granting each Canadian citizen a guaranteed annual income whose amount would be scientifically calculated to enable him to purchase the share of the national production which he either earns through his work or is fully entitled to as a Canadian citizen.

In the second place, Mr. Speaker, this legislation would certainly increase Canadian production without necessarily boosting prices, but of course prices might still go up.