

of food production of 1 per cent, whereas population has increased by 4 per cent.

In some of the countries that are asking for more food we are seeing at the same time more wastage of food. A lot of food is wasted in this country. The food and agricultural organization of the United Nations has reported that the world's underdeveloped countries are falling behind in the race to match food output with growing populations. United Nations' experts estimate that roughly the same number of people remain undernourished today as ten years ago, namely, between 300 million and 500 million people. Yet we consumers in Canada think we should have lower food prices, having discouraged food production in this country and with most parts of the world being short of food.

No matter what this committee does we will not get cheaper food. The government thinks it can control inflation and thus lower food prices across the board. I say in this they have failed completely. As I started out to say, we are in the midst of a rapidly spiralling rate of inflation.

What will this proposed committee do, Mr. Speaker? I know it will concern itself mainly with the cost of meat. In view of the modern trends in meat production, meat processing and meat cutting, there will be some bad news for the Canadian consumer. Meat cutters are demanding \$6 an hour to cut meat. A trend we will be seeing in the near future in slaughtering houses in the pre-cutting of meat in order to eliminate the \$6 an hour meat-cutting that takes place in supermarkets and food chains. This will cause more wastage of beef, more spoilage and thus higher prices. The simple fact is that this is the trend today, and this committee will not be able to do anything about it.

A prices review board has been recommended. I recall the Prices and Incomes Commission did not really solve any problems. Six years ago a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons brought in a report having studied this question for two years, and their suggestion was the creation of a consumer affairs department. The consumer affairs department has increased the cost of food to Canadian consumers. The only thing that the consumer affairs department has done is to set up what I call a quasi-ombudsman to whom people write letters of complaint. The government has thus used its friendly persuasion on some companies to live up to the paper guarantees they have been giving out. However, through its regulations and controls the department of consumer affairs has increased the cost of food.

The prices review board suggested by the socialist party will take more people out of production and put them into management control and regulation. These people have to be paid. The more people we take out of the production of food, the higher the price paid for that food. This socialist concept of a marketing board actually increases the number of middlemen between farmer and market and, as I say, these middlemen have to be paid. Many people think that the problems of egg marketing are now solved because we have a marketing board. The rising price of feed grain would have kept the situation in balance, but the government did not leave it alone. They paid the farmers to get out of chicken production or to reduce production, just as they paid farmers to get out of wool production and reduced the subsidy on lamb.

Food Prices Committee

We are not encouraging sufficient farmers to get into beef production. Nor are we encouraging sufficient farmers to get into hog production. We are afraid to encourage production of this sort. Under the small farms program, \$3,000 will be given to farmers who get out of production and sell their land. Many of these small farms could produce any number of commodities, something that must be encouraged.

Another aspect of socialism in society today is that our city planners have devised a neat system for doing away with the corner-store through the erection of shopping centres. These shopping centres comprise malls in which you can spend all day. There is no snow to shovel and there are check-rooms for your coats. Who pays for all this? The consumer pays for this convenience, of course. I suggest the next time hon. members visit such a shopping centre they take a look at how the food is packaged. More and more pre-cut and pre-cooked food is on sale today, and more and more consumers are buying it. More and more people are eating out than ever before, and the trend is continuing.

• (2110)

This is part of the modern society we are living in. If a prices and review board places a freeze at the top, I suggest this will not change the trend. We cannot do away with large shopping centres and chain stores now supplying food. The cost will be there and the mark-up of 10 per cent or 20 per cent, whatever it is, for the distribution of food will still remain. If we put a ceiling on top, the farmer gets hurt. If he cannot make money by producing, and live the way other Canadians in other segments of our society are living, he will get out of the business. Farmers have been doing this because they have no encouragement to stay. What will happen when they get out of the business? We will depend more and more on world markets for food. We will not be importing 12 per cent of our beef; we will be importing 20 per cent. We will not be importing 90 per cent of our lamb; we will be importing 100 per cent. This will apply to hogs and everything else.

If we want to lower food prices in Canada, we must encourage production. If food is produced right here at home, the people of Canada can eat more cheaply than people in other parts of the world, because we will not have the transportation costs. If we discourage the production of food in Canada, we will encourage increased prices. If we allow inflation to run away and spiral upwards, that will result in increased food prices and the whole economy will be hurt.

If this committee is to do anything, let it hire experts to delve into the costs of distribution of food in this country. If the committee resorts to some kind of additional control, that will be wrong. What happened in Russia? They have experienced the worst crop in years because of controls. China has not done well, and other countries have had problems in respect of food supplies. The United States has not faced this difficulty, and Canada has not yet; but if we move along the socialist line we will have trouble.

The great province of Saskatchewan produces wheat but I suggest it has not intensified its agricultural industry enough, because of socialism. I was pleased to hear the