

*Food Prices*

tives voted against this amendment when it was originally proposed—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. member is getting outside the point of order. I thank hon. members for their contributions and would ask the indulgence of the House for some 30 minutes while I prepare my decision on what has become a narrow but difficult point in my mind. I hope that the Creditiste, who is making the first-round contribution to this debate will be prepared to proceed now.

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before continuing with the debate, I should advise the House that pursuant to Standing Order 40 the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams)—Energy—Crude Petroleum—Inquiry as to meeting with Alberta ministers—Discussion of consumers' subsidy; the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard)—Health—Suggested institution of insured medical and surgical supplies for old age pensioners and others on low incomes; the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond (Mr. MacInnis)—Cape Breton Development Corporation—Alleged failure of corporation to comply with legislation—Government action.

I thank the Creditiste spokesman for helping the Chair in these somewhat exceptional circumstances.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1700)

### FOOD PRICES

CONCURRENCE IN SECOND REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRENDS IN FOOD PRICES

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. McGrath.

That the second report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices, presented to the House on Wednesday, July 25, 1973, be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, we are now considering a motion for concurrence in the second report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices, tabled on Wednesday, July 25, 1973.

Last Thursday this question was debated in the House by the Progressive Conservatives until 4 or 5 o'clock a.m. Friday and, at that time, I stated that the time of the House was being abused, that those very same subjects could have been discussed today on the occasion of the motion before us. Some people are always complaining that the Canadian public is paying too many taxes, that

[Mr. Broadbent.]

food, clothing, machinery, etc. are too expensive but when it comes to wasting the time of the House, for example—which costs thousands of dollars every day because of the mobilization of members, senators and staff—scruples are not too high. In fact they go as far as discussing a question—which we could have debated today—until 4 or 5 in the morning to give the Canadian public the impression that poor Parliament members are working at night.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservatives are jokers; they are responsible for our coming back day after day in the House to gain some political prestige with the voters by arguing that they are most interested in the welfare of the people. I repeat that they are jokers.

As regards the proposals made by the Conservatives to fight the increasing prices of foodstuff their solution is the same today as a couple of months back: a price freeze. This solution was used in Great Britain to no avail and turned into a complete flop. This solution is still in force in the United States and again it proved to be a complete flop.

Meat producers for instance stopped selling their product on account of the price freeze and because they would not be bothered or forced by any government. Now food production in the United States is decreasing as a direct result of the price freeze. However, the black market is thriving in that country. You cannot buy meat in a butcher's shop at the price fixed by the government, but you can get some behind the counter on the black market, in the backstreet, at an excessive price. The Progressive Conservatives did not realize that.

Mr. Speaker, during the war there was a price freeze under the famous Wartime Price Board. Everything was controlled; rationing tickets were distributed to all Canadian consumers to enable them to buy preserves, sugar, tea, coffee and meat. The Mackenzie King government did not distribute the rationing tickets according to individual needs, but it shaped the people's stomach according to the size of the rationing ticket. We had that during the war.

At the regular price we had a hard time getting what we needed, but on the black market, we could get anything. Sugar at 8c/ a pound was impossible to find, but if you paid 20c/ a pound, you could get 100 pounds of sugar! We saw this with our own eyes. The same was true for butter: on the ordinary market, you needed coupons, but on the black market you could get as much butter as you wanted at 10c/ or 15c/ more a pound.

The Progressive Conservatives do not remember this, even though these wartime controls had been imposed by the Liberals. Today, we are at peace, but they still talk of controls and of price and wage freezes.

My friends of the New Democratic Party do not want a price and wage freeze. If they could get a price freeze only without a wages freeze, they would be happy. But they are afraid to ask for a price freeze without a wage freeze because wages have a direct effect on the price of goods. Therefore, they go about it in another way. They say: We shall tax profits more. But they do not say that taxes also have an effect on prices. If profits were taxed, the result would be the same.

Mr. Speaker, I heard again a while ago the amendment which reads as follows: