

Mr. ZAPLITNY: I am not going to take time to reply to the hon. member who reaps the harvest that he does not sow from lumber.

If we take steers as the commodity in exchange for farm implements, in 1920 it took 21 hundredweight of good steers to buy a double disc drill, and in 1947, 24 hundredweight. In 1920 it took 23 hundredweight to buy a binder, and in 1947, 29 hundredweight. In 1920 it took 8 hundredweight to buy a mower, and in 1947, 11 hundredweight. In 1920 it took 14 hundredweight to buy a gang plow, and in 1947, 13 hundredweight. That is the only case in which the position was more favourable in 1947 than in 1920. So much for the position of the farmer from that angle.

There are those who have said they do not agree with the C.C.F. on controls because it would involve subsidies, and definite statements were made both on the government side and by the Progressive Conservatives that they do not believe in a permanent policy of subsidizing. It is hard to understand that attitude when we realize that we have had in this country ever since the days of the national policy of Sir John A. Macdonald a permanent policy of subsidization, with the exception of a very few instances, and that both governments, Liberal and Conservative, have followed the same policy up until today. It is false to claim that we have not had a permanent policy of subsidization in peacetime when one remembers the tariff policy instituted in the early days of this country and maintained to a greater or less degree by all governments ever since. The tariff has had the result of subsidizing certain industries of this country. I am not saying that in itself was a bad thing to do, but in many cases it was unfair to the prairie provinces and to the maritimes. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent) said, as reported at page 772 of *Hansard*:

In the view of us who sit on this side of the house the subsidy system is not a system which can be permanent in our economy. It is not a peacetime system. It is a system which served its purpose during the war and under those extraordinary conditions. We do not agree with my hon. friends of the C.C.F., but we discuss their views and they discuss ours, and ours differ on that point. We do not believe in subsidies as a permanent peacetime policy, and we endeavoured to get away from them as quickly as the circumstances which had made it necessary to resort to them during the war permitted us to do so.

I say that is not a statement of fact; it may be a statement of opinion. The minister may not believe in subsidies personally, but it is wrong to say that it has never been the

peacetime system followed by this or other governments in this country, because we have always had the tariff system in Canada and it has always been a system of subsidies. He went on to say:

The government got away from the subsidy system as quickly as they could when the war ended.

They got away from it faster than parliament had asked them to do. It is well known that this house asked the government to continue the subsidy on milk, but the government reversed that decision and removed the subsidy. We may understand why the minister made that statement when we see that he started off on the previous page with this statement:

There are things which are believed by a great many of us—and by me among others—which may not be facts at all.

That may, of course, explain the situation.

Turning to the C.C.F. in this debate, we have been accused by various members in the house of wanting to impose on the people of this country some sort of system of control they do not want. The facts do not bear that out. We are here to represent the people who have elected us and, to a degree, all the people of this country. The people of this country have expressed their opinions by resolutions, letters and in public meetings, asking us that something be done immediately to solve the problem of the cost of living. As the hon. member for Fraser Valley admitted only a few minutes ago, he does not know what could be done immediately, other than price control while the government took time to study the situation. What we are asking for is immediate action on price control until the government or any other group on this side suggest a better solution. That would give them time to formulate their ideas. Because we suggest that and because we have used the opportunity afforded by this motion to express our opinions, we are accused by some of almost all kinds of ulterior motives.

I want to place on the record in summarized form what we have been trying to impress on the government and the house, so that it will be there as an alternative to what the government itself proposes, which is the setting up of a committee. Our proposals may be summarized briefly in five points:

1. We suggest that the government re-establish price controls and subsidies on the essential commodities of life.