

*The Address—Mr. G. S. White*

that any member of parliament, who must at least have the respect and the confidence of his own electors to be elected to parliament, should make such slanderous statements, which, taken in a literal way, include every member of this house, including the members of his own socialist party. To me these tactics have a decided similarity to those adopted by the communists, a smear campaign to smear persons in positions of responsibility in a democracy, a tendency intended to discredit and destroy the confidence of the public in their elected representatives. The technique is well recognized as a part of a communistic program before they move in to take over a country. I have noticed in the press on various occasions how bitterly the socialists complain when anyone attacks their communistic policies, and how they adopt a holier-than-thou attitude when anyone attempts to compare their philosophy with that of Karl Marx. I for one sincerely hope that the hon. member for Vancouver North will persist in his announced intention to have the member appear before the committee on privileges and elections.

In a past session, Mr. Speaker, I brought to the attention of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) the activities of the wartime prices and trade board in the county of Hastings. The village in which I reside has always been greatly honoured with very special attention from these official snoopers from the wartime prices and trade board. I am happy to report that their activities still continue. In some cases, in my opinion, they have been almost vicious. When one considers the persons who are prosecuted or persecuted, whichever way you wish to put it, one is forced to wonder and question at times whether or not there is a slight political tinge to the whole manner in which these prosecutions are carried out.

The board issues so many orders, regulations and directions that the average grocer is unable to keep up with the flood. According to a food bulletin issued by the board in November, 1948, there were in effect on the 15th November, 1948, fifty-two orders relating to the food trade. Of those fifty-two orders no less than thirty-nine were passed between the first of January, 1948, and the 15th November, 1948. The great majority of these orders were issued by the administrator. Once they are issued they have the force of law without ever passing through this house, which, after all, is at least supposed to approve and pass the laws to which Canadians are subject. The original order setting up the wartime prices and trade board, P.C.

8528, granted very wide powers to the board. In fact the very first words of this order in council are.

—the wartime prices and trade board regulations were made and established to provide safeguards under war conditions—

I say to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) that it might be very interesting for his department to give a ruling as to whether or not the war emergency still exists. This original order also provides that the agents and servants of the board have the right at all times to enter upon any premises and inspect and remove books, documents or records of any nature. It further provides that all orders and regulations are effective merely after publication in the *Canada Gazette*, and also that servants and agents of the board are granted complete immunity for any act they may perform under these regulations. All this seems to me hardly consistent with recognized legal procedure in Canada. It sounds more like something we might expect under a gestapo order. These orders are simply mailed to the merchants, and it makes no difference whether or not they receive them, because they are bound by all the orders and regulations.

I should like to point out, as I have on previous occasions, what happens when these people descend upon your village. A short time ago I had occasion to defend a grocer who was charged with several violations of the regulations. The official snooper from this board called at a store, where he discovered several slight infractions. For instance, he found that oranges were selling for 30 cents a dozen whereas the ceiling price was 29 cents, a matter of one-twelfth of a cent on each orange. He found grapefruit selling at four for 25 cents instead of four for 24 cents, and canned fruit at a fraction of a cent over the ceiling. The investigator demanded the invoices covering these items, though it is always difficult for a grocer or anyone else to pick out an invoice and be certain that it covers the identical article on the shelf. In any event the investigator took the invoices away with him, but before leaving he obtained a statement from the grocer, without telling the grocer he was not obliged to sign it and, what was more serious, without telling the grocer that this statement would be used in court at a later date. This was not one of the printed forms used by the board; it was a statement written out entirely by the investigator.

In due time the grocer was charged and the matter came before the court. I appeared for the grocer and asked the magistrate for an adjournment because I did not have the invoices. I also asked the magistrate to