

(a) the words "Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons" in the first paragraph and substituting therefor the words "Special Committee of this House",

(b) the word "Joint" on the second paragraph, and

(c) the fourth paragraph.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the motion. It is difficult at the moment to compare the hon. member's motion with the main motion before us. I am not sure whether any hon. members would like to advise the Chair regarding the procedural aspect of the motion. If not, it will be put to the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I think this is one of the more important matters to come before the House and I am glad that it is being considered at an early stage. I am not saying that the committee will do what we want it to do or will go as far as we want it to go, but I do feel that a discussion of food prices and a move for action at this time is essential. After all, this is one of the measures which, more than most others, affects every one of us in our capacity as consumers. It affects us in varying degrees, it is true, but it affects us all.

I was glad that the minister laid down the terms of reference of the committee in the government resolution briefly and clearly, but when it comes to the official opposition there are a few things I want to say. The previous speaker urged the government to take a giant bite by including everything related to the cost of living in this motion. When he kept adding in all the expenses that go into the cost of living he reminded me of those old preachers who wanted paradise in one bite or else no paradise—you were condemned to go down below. I think we must take things step by step, and I feel sure that by decrying the suggestion that we start first with the most urgent matter, namely the price of food, the official opposition are actually making an excuse for not getting started on anything at all. For this reason, I am glad that we started with food prices.

The hon. member spoke of the lack of concrete measures in the government's program and said that the purpose of this committee must be to lay the blame on the government. But the people of this country cannot heap blame on the government, and to my way of thinking the official opposition so far has failed to give any notion in a concrete way of what they would have done or what they want to see come out of this committee.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, whatever were their motives, we welcome their conversion in regard to the Senate as contained in their amendment. This was the only concrete proposal in the previous speech. A number of us have been busy lately speaking over the radio and television making no secret of the fact that we intended to move that members of the Senate be not included in this committee. So, I am very glad that at least one idea of a fruitful character has been picked out and used in the debate this afternoon by a member of the official opposition.

Food Prices Committee

I should like to point out something else to members of the official opposition, and I wish the previous speaker would stay long enough to listen to the consequences of what he suggested. If the official opposition follows through with their suggestion, the net result will be to remove a comfortable majority of the Liberal members on the committee. If we eliminate members of the other place, we will be eliminating a very comfortable wedge of Liberal majority support for the government on this prices committee. This is surely a curious move for the official opposition to make.

Mr. Lawrence: That never occurred to me.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): I suppose that is true, because the whole matter of the control of food prices is quite foreign to the official opposition. They have not taken any concrete action in the past. Certainly, they have voiced objections, but they have not said what results they expect the committee to achieve.

Before I go further in my remarks I do not wish to neglect to say that if this committee is to amount to anything in the view of members of our party there must result from it the establishment of a prices review board or a similar monitoring agency which will continue to look after the price of food after the committee has made its recommendations. When those recommendations are before the government, we want the immediate implementation of the one requesting the establishment of a prices review board which will have the responsibility of looking at the proposed price increases and demanding that those who made the proposals justify the need for an increase or else that increase will not be granted. Such an agency must also have the power to roll back those price increases which are unjustified. Let members of the official opposition not tell me that they have been urging this, because they have not. It is we in this group who have been urging this, and this is a definite recommendation that we shall seek from this prices committee.

Mr. Hellyer: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Perhaps the hon. member could ask his question at the end of my remarks I can promise him that there will be an end.

I also say that the type of speech that I would like to hear from the official opposition is one which would include some of the things which they hope this committee could accomplish, or information on such accomplishments in other places, because what we get out of this committee will depend on what goes into it. If it is just a matter of one party in this House getting publicity for itself, then I do not think the committee will be worth while. But I believe that out of the committee can come the beginning of a pattern for controlling prices in Canada in such a way that possibly on a selective basis rising food prices can be kept in check, and people will be sure of getting the ingredients of a healthy diet to insure nutrition and energy at prices they can afford.

• (1540)

It is not important that this debate be rushed here with just one speaker from each party. The important thing is that a reasonable amount of time be taken by the commit-