

Farm Machinery Prices

the sky-high and unjustifiable increase of farm equipment prices, which places a huge burden on the shoulders of the Canadian farmers when they are about to start their spring work.

Mr. Speaker, this is a definite matter; its importance is of course public, since it concerns mainly the farmers, not only those in the west, but the farmers all across Canada.

The hon. member contends there has been a tremendous price increase regarding farm equipment, and that is true. However, are farm machinery prices the only ones to increase in Canada? For instance, have clothing and food prices not increased? Is this matter not as definite and important as that raised by the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale?

Mr. Speaker, prices are increasing not only with regard to farm machinery but also in housing construction, on account of the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials; rent prices and education prices also are going up. It costs more today to keep a child in university and high school than was the case one or two years ago. These questions are just as important as the price increase of farm equipment.

I fully understand the stand taken by my good friend, the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) in favour of this motion for adjournment but, Mr. Speaker, are they not the same people who, all across Canada, strongly advocate salary increases, or increases in people's income which are indirectly involved in the cost of production in Canada, in the field of farm equipment just like in any other field.

These are the same people who now want to discuss, in the federal parliament, the opportunity to decide if there have been too many, not enough or a reasonable number of price increases.

Mr. Speaker, prices of farm machinery and equipment depend on those who build or industrialize these machines. The prices are set by private enterprise. If there happens to be a combine in any field whatever we have federal legislation which allows us to determine whether there are speculators exercising their influence in a certain field of society.

Well, I sincerely believe, Mr. Speaker, that this motion to adjourn is not at all regular at the present time because if we are to consider the importance of farm machinery, we must do the same for all fields of economic activity in Canada. Food items are directly dependent upon farming operations in Canada.

[Mr. Caouette.]

Now, Mr. Speaker, even though the matter is important and definite, this is not the time, in my opinion, to deal with it, because the house must now proceed to the establishment of a legislative measure which will allow, not only one class, but all classes of society, to benefit from a just and fair legislation.

● (4:00 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the motion complies with the requirements of paragraph 2 of citation 100 in regard to moving the adjournment of the house under standing order 26 in that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention. I think it also complies with the requirements of paragraph 3 which says that the ground of urgency of debate is valid when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the house do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough, and so on. It does not seem to me that there will be an opportunity in the immediate future when the subject matter raised by the hon. member can be debated.

If we look at paragraph 1 of the citation we find it says that the matter must involve the administrative responsibility of the government. I am not sure whether the price of farm machinery is in fact an administrative responsibility of the Department of Agriculture or the Minister of Agriculture. However, this situation has gone on so long without anything being done that what is required is an investigation to find out why the price of machinery has been going up. I think this is the point of the hon. member who moved the motion, he wishes to bring the question to the attention of the house, and the delay in dealing with the matter is the reason for it being a matter of urgency.

As the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam has stated, a debate this afternoon and this evening could not change the price of farm machinery, but surely we could have a statement from the Minister of Agriculture indicating that this matter will be taken up by his department or will be referred to the agricultural committee. Then he could perhaps get on with the matter. I agree it has been postponed so long that it becomes more urgent day by day.

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Agriculture): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly concur in the sentiments of the hon. member who moved the motion to the effect that the cost-price squeeze in which the farmer finds himself is of very serious moment. I think we