

Private Members' Business

I can give you many arguments as to why we should go and use the instruments at our disposal, such as parliamentary committees, such as the competition bureau—

An hon. member: Only Bob White can afford a Lincoln Continental.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Only Bob White or perhaps Ed Broadbent could, or maybe even Ian Deans, all those wonderful New Democrats who have the solutions for every problem in the world.

I have had a little difficulty in trying to figure out, because I think we should be realistic, if indeed we need a board of inquiry or, God forbid, a Royal commission. What do we hope to obtain by that?

I know better than anybody that there is always room for abuses and excesses in the free market system. Do not forget that the members who sit on all sides of this House are consumers as well. When those excesses take place in the marketplace, it affects everyone. It crosses partisan lines, but we had instruments to deal with that. Surely to goodness we have instruments to deal with that.

Given a choice between a U.S.S.R. style regimented economy—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): The hon. member is moaning in his chair. No wonder he is moaning. With the motion that he has put forward to us, he wants to go in and find out why Mrs. Smith at the corner store is charging 7 cents for the lollipop instead of 6 cents. Get with it. These guys are out to lunch on most things that come up. They claim to sit over there and represent the viewpoint of average Canadians.

The Lincoln Continental, I will never forget the Lincoln Continental. Perhaps just perhaps we should look and take their suggestion more seriously, if they could show me where we could find the money which would not take away from the just deserved wage settlement in the Public Service of Canada, the charge hands, and the dockyard workers and all those individuals. If they could show me that the money would not come from support for women's programs, for native friendship centres, if they could show me that it would not shut down more hospital beds, that it would not take away from the post-secondary education system, I would

say maybe we could look at this. But maybe, they should have had an amendment. The amendment should have said: "subject to financing being arranged through a loan guarantee" or perhaps a co-signature by the premier of Ontario since he seemed to have so much credibility with the financial community in this country.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I think I have probably seen right now as my colleague who just finished speaking leaves the House one of the most deplorable exercises in insults to my NDP colleague who has tried to present a private members' bill which is not mischievous but is looking toward getting something for consumers across this country.

I am not going to respond to all of the Russian and socialist and other affirmations that I have from my colleague because I really think that this Parliament should be a Parliament of ideas and debate and not of gratuitous insults. I am tempted, but I will stay away from that.

I want to look at the question concerning prices in Canada because that, above all, is what we are looking at. A royal commission is what you make of it. On the other side, we were speaking about the Macdonald Royal commission having had some good aspects. I think it did have some good things to say.

We have had Royal commissions on the status of women which have actually led to a great deal of change in consciousness raising and change in our country.

To say that they are just going to gather dust and are of no benefit to the common everyday Canadian, I think that is wrong.

The question is: Is the subject of sufficient interest or urgency that it should be treated by a Royal commission? I am a consumer advocate myself, non-partisan. I have never been a consumer advocate for Liberals, the Conservatives or the NDP per se. I was a consumer advocate dealing with the questions that were coming in from consumers and trying to give them answers as to why automobiles and automobile repairs were much more expensive here in Canada than in the United States.

I can tell you that apart from the question of taxation and transportation, even in transportation, the reason has been brought out very eloquently by my colleague. It is pure, simple greed and it permeates throughout our entire society here in Canada where we do pay a lot more