

Food Prices Committee

been in five years. These things should be kept in mind by the committee when it examines the food industry.

Finally, the committee should look into the area of corporate expenditures related to the construction of fancy buildings, the use of fancy advertising and so on. Furthermore, the committee should take some initiative or show some imagination by examining the possibility of having a program to help those people in Canada who are in need of a proper diet and proper nutrition. For example, one might examine the idea of an internal food aid program. This would be the type of program that would ensure that Canadians on low incomes, and perhaps those in some isolated areas of this nation, would have a proper diet. If we were to examine the kind of program outlined by the United States government, perhaps we would find that such a program could be generated for the farmers of this nation, particularly the farmers of eastern Canada and the Maritimes rather than the wheat producers. Through an internal aid food program, we could generate something in the neighbourhood of \$200 million for the benefit of the producers and at the same time solve the problems of the needy people in this country where one Canadian in every four still lives below the poverty line. That kind of redistribution in terms of food should be given serious consideration.

I asked in this House for a copy of a report by the United States Department of Agriculture under its internal food aid program, as did the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) previously. When one asks for information on such a program what is the result? We are told that the publication of this report is not in the public interest. It is not in the public interest because federal governments, either the Tweedledee's or the Tweedledum's, have not had the imagination to develop this kind of program which would be of assistance to the primary producers of this country. This is one area into which I hope the committee will look.

I have a letter, if I may call it a letter—perhaps it is more in the form of a petition—from the Federated Co-operatives Limited in Saskatchewan. It is addressed to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who just stepped out. This organization is interested in the matter of the inflated costs. It reads:

WHEREAS the Prices and Incomes Commission in its final report—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him under the order of last week has expired. He could continue, however, if there is unanimous consent of the House. Is this agreed.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Knight: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my fellow members for their courtesy in giving me this extra time, including the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). I shall proceed to the part of this letter containing the resolution:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the Government of Canada to reconsider the report of the Prices and Incomes Commission and to initiate, with the least possible delay, a program of measures designed to control inflation and to stabilize prices in Canada;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such measures be con-

[Mr. Knight.]

trived and applied in such a manner as to avoid placing the preponderance of its consequences upon wage earners or persons of fixed income, but in fair and just manner, apply to all forms of individual, corporate and institutional income and include profits, interest, salaries and wages, and tax-derived revenues.

This is something we would never get from the Tory party. When this committee draws its report, I suggest it may come to the conclusion that there must be a program of income support or support prices for the producer's commodities, perhaps in the form of guaranteed minimum prices. On the other end, in terms of the consumers, the committee may conclude that there should be a program of income redistribution in this country so that people will have the money necessary to purchase those consumer goods, such as food, which everyone needs.

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, as I rise to take part in this debate I wish to say that as a member of this House of Commons I am somewhat shocked by the blasphemies heaped upon the members of my party by my friends to the left, especially when we were so generous in permitting the hon. member a few moments of extra time.

Like everyone else who has preceded me in this debate, I am concerned about the price of food and how it keeps rising. I am concerned about the effect of these increases on pensioners and others on fixed incomes. Frankly, I do not understand how some people are able to raise a family of three or four children with all the necessities in respect of clothing, housing and so on, on the incomes they have. I am concerned about what is happening to these people in the communities. They are taxed at one end of the scale by the Department of National Revenue, by sales taxes, by municipal taxes, by education taxes, by the excise tax, and on the other end of the scale they are taxed by the fact that the value of the dollar they have dwindles and disappears. I agree with many hon. members who have spoken from both sides of this House that if this increase in food costs had in some way supported the farmers or producers of Canada in a realistic manner then maybe the public would not be so concerned. But that has not happened.

The hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) spoke of the abandoned farms in the west. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we have them in eastern Ontario as well. The government has embarked on a marketing policy that is putting producers out of the market. As if that process needed any help, a capital gains tax has been placed on farmlands, even when they are passed within a family. The basic herd principle has been abandoned. All these factors not only drive producers off the land but ensure that very few new producers can come on the land to take their place. I remember this past spring and fall that the farmers of eastern Ontario, particularly in Dundas, Grenville and Carleton counties, were having difficulty in even getting onto the land to see whether they could harvest their stunted crops. When they could not get on the land to do that, when they needed cash to help them, when they needed a policy to help stabilize the price of feed, when they needed real help, this government came through with a pittance in comparison with the size of the problem. In fact, one farmer in my constituency said to me that what he got from the government in the form of aid in that