

Cost of Living

must be led to ask: How could we prevent such conditions? Now, we have been suggesting it for years and I take the liberty of repeating it this evening: We should accept some basic and elementary economic principles. For example, we manufacture some products because we need them and they are meant for consumption. Under such an elementary principle, there should always be some balance—

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The hon. member for Bellechasse on a point of order.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, it is extremely unpleasant—and I should not want to displease any of my colleagues in this House—to see that when the member for Champlain (Mr. Matte) tries to make himself heard in this honourable assembly, some hon. members exchange rather highly pitched conversations. This disturbs the orator considerably and I merely wish to suggest that the Chair ask hon. members to listen to the pertinent observations of the representative for Champlain. If they wish to talk, they can withdraw behind the curtains.

My remarks, Mr. Speaker, is not intended to hurt our Anglophone friends, but as we are in a minority in the House, I feel that when a Francophone has the floor, he should be listened to, as well as any other parliamentarian. Then, democracy would be a fact in Parliament, and we could in that way set an example for the whole nation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I do believe the point raised by the hon. member is pertinent and I take this opportunity—

[*English*]

I take this opportunity to invite hon. members who wish to carry on conversations to either leave the chamber or to speak more quietly, so that hon. members who have the floor will at least gain the impression that they are being listened to. At the same time, this will permit other members to listen to the member who has the floor if they are interested.

[*Translation*]

I would invite hon. members to follow the debate or at least not to prevent the hon. member who has the floor from proceeding with his remarks.

The hon. member for Champlain.

Mr. Matte: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague from Bellechasse for helping me make myself heard.

I was saying that if we were to proceed from a basic principle such as that of the products we are manufacturing, it would be found that they are being made for consumption. Consequently, the normal tendency would be to work towards balancing production and consumption; this is obvious. If the question were asked to any individual of any age he would also understand that if products are manufactured it is for consumption purposes and if we want them to be consumed one must have the necessary purchasing power.

But today we are faced with such a complex situation that we sometimes take action which interferes with pro-

[*Mr. Matte.*]

duction, which does not afford the consumer the purchasing power which he requires to buy those products. Then, from both sides, we give rise to ridiculous situations because it is unthinkable in a country such as ours which can produce about all kind of products, where we enjoy all we need for food, clothing and lodging, that we can even think of a shortage of products.

I think we all agree on this principle. Surely in such a rich country as ours we have all we need. As happened last year, when we were short of dairy products, of milk powder for instance—which could have been sold easily had it been available—because of a government which did its utmost to prevent milk producers from producing more, we were faced with a ridiculous situation.

We voluntarily impede or paralyse production in a field, and that is followed by a shortage; then, imports are even vindicated in a field where we can produce as much as we want not only for our own purposes, but for other countries as well.

Those ridiculous situations, we have had several of, and still continue to have. It was decided once again to pay not to have people sow feed grains out west when it was known quite well that eastern producers, particularly in Quebec, were in need of it. That is again another intolerable situation; on the one hand, we pay not to sow and, on the other, we sell at excessive prices products we would need for other related productions.

Mr. Speaker, we are always faced with such irrational situations. Why? Because we do not accept the basic, elementary, economic principles as the one I mentioned earlier, that products are made to be consumed. If they are to be consumed, let us give people the necessary purchasing power with which to buy them. If that principle were accepted, would it be possible to talk about inflation? Never since then prices do not matter, and the whole thing becomes a secondary issue. If products cost so much and consumers are given so much with which to buy them, prices do not matter, what is important is to have the power with which to buy them.

In a system where money is used to promote exchange and distribution, when a means becomes an end, the result is situations such as the one we have.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we will never be able to right the situation and find adequate solutions to those problems of inflationary pressure and price escalation until we think about solving at the root level the economic problems that creep in and perturb the whole financial system, the whole system of production and the whole system of consumption. One day, we shall have to wake up and try and find the only real solutions which are those we are advocating and shall continue to advocate. Then Canadian consumers, treated more equitably, would find it easier to gain their freedom and prosper.

● (2140)

[*English*]

Mr. Elmer MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, before intervening in this very important debate on the motion before the House I would like to assure my friends in the Cr ditiste party that we on this side are very interested in what our French-speaking colleagues have to say.