

Speech delivered on the floor of the House of Representatives, by the Hon. John E. Fogarty, MC, June 21, 1945, relative to the Extension of the Price Control Act.

Mr. Speaker:

No one would advocate inflation as a cure to the problems which beset our domestic economy, yet restricting the operation of the Office of Price Administration would most certainly be a very dangerous step in that direction.

I have heard most of the criticisms which have been directed at OPA and to be perfectly honest I have to admit I have agreed at least in part with some of those criticisms. However, the continuance of OPA is more vital now than its existence was at the time this legislation first came before the House.

Everyone knows there is not enough of anything to satisfy the civilian demand. To take the controls off now, I am convinced, would be disastrous. To permit crippling amendments to the Price Control Act to become Law would be opening the door for all sorts of abuses of Price Control and would be but the first step in a spiral we would find ourselves powerless to control.

Because we have borne the strain of restrictions that were imposed when we became involved in war, it is only natural to grow impatient and long for the removal of all these regulations. We grow tired and impatient and restless under the controls which we all acknowledge are a necessary part of the battle for complete victory over our enemies.

It is not possible for any of us to say when the war in the Pacific will be over. We pray God it might be tomorrow, but until that war is at an end and we have successfully put our civilian economy on a sound footing, some of these restrictions will be necessary. More vital than all the rest is Price Control.

The Office of Price Administration must be continued in operation and it is folly to think we can restrict its life to a period of six months. This

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agency of the government reaches into the homes of all the people of the country. It must be given the authority to carry on its job and it should be given whatever additional authority is necessary to stamp out the illegal operations which are today sucking the life out of the unity of effort which has up to now characterized our war effort.

Black Market Operators are today a curse that is threatening the home front to as great a degree as the Jap once threatened in the Pacific. With Germany destroyed and our brave fighting men driving the Japs down into oblivion the worst affliction we suffer from at home - the greatest danger we face - is the sneaky, thieving operators of the Black Market.

They should be stamped out and the campaign against them should be waged with relentless vigor. Whatever authority the OPA needs to accomplish this purpose should be given that agency - and OPA should be held strictly accountable for success. If you don't give the authority - then you can't complain if they don't do the job.

In my State there is an acute shortage of food. People have put up with many difficulties and they haven't complained about the absence of meat and other substantial items as long as they could get substitutes. Now the substitutes are disappearing and the wives and mothers of servicemen who have children to feed are growing angry at shortages they are convinced could have been avoided.

OPA has been guilty of some blunders I am convinced. Their orders which restricted the production of pork are in great measure responsible for the present scarcity. Those responsible in OPA should be cleaned out before they have an opportunity to cause more damage.

I am today inserting in the record three "Letters to the Editor" which have been published in the Providence Evening Bulletin. I have no doubt this

newspaper has received many such letters. I have received a great many - some of these letters are violent in tone. Others drive me to the verge of distraction because I know they come from mothers of servicemen who are struggling to keep a family fed. They come from the wives of soldiers and sailors and marines - wives who are trying valiantly to hold a home together and feed little children on the pityfully small amount of pigs ears and tails that find their way to the market.

We all know the meat situation is deplorable. I am not speaking for myself, though Heaven knows I'd give almost anything to get a look at a well stocked meat counter again.

I have hesitated before bringing this matter up because I did not want it to appear that I was sniping at those who are honestly trying to solve the problem. However, the time has come for action. Something must be done and done fast.

Anyone can see from the tone of these letters I have inserted in the Record, that all our efforts at International Cooperation are seriously threatened. There is a growing bitterness - and I say this advisedly - among the people I have talked to at home. This bitterness is directed in large part at the shipment of food abroad, while our own people go without. Let me tell you this - the newspaper which published these letters from its subscribers was one of the first papers in the country to champion our entry into the war to save Britain. The Journal and Bulletin were all out for aid to England long before that became the Nation's policy. Yet this newspaper now asks why we must ship food to England while Canada wallows in an over-abundance of food which we can't get. To me the present attitude of these newspapers is the best possible evidence that our program of international cooperation is threatened by the failure of those responsible to produce and distribute sufficient food to our own people.

I can understand the natural desire to prevent starvation abroad. I can understand the idea behind the policy of providing food to the peoples of Europe in order to win them over to our way of life and to guarantee the success of democratic governments. I agree we should be willing to make sacrifices in order to accomplish such a laudable purpose. However, there is one fact that seems to be generally overlooked. We can't have any spirit of good will toward our stricken brethren in Europe unless that good will actually lives and breathes in the breast of the ordinary man and woman in America.

Our effort to keep the war machinery rolling is constant. Day in and day out we keep our minds on the job of keeping the industrial machinery of the country under a full head of steam. We worry about reconversion so that there will not be a slump in our economic life. But all that machinery, all the industrial strength we possess can't function without the human element and the men and women who have to make it tick are entitled to a little consideration - once in a while. Men can't worry about food for their families and still have enough enthusiasm left, or energy left - to do a good day's work at a machine that is grinding out the tools that will destroy Japan.

These people - the American people - the decent people who don't patronize the black market need some attention. Their lives need a little overhauling.

If it is necessary to call a temporary halt in the shipment of food to European people, then a halt must be made. The shipments can be resumed when distribution at home has returned to something like enough to provide our own people with enough to eat.

I am not trying to arouse passions that are best left sleeping. I am not trying to infer that we are going hungry. I am saying - positively - the people at home, our own people, are entitled to some attention and they are demanding that they get it.

In spite of all the shortages there are the people in my State who

still demonstrate their strong support of the war effort. Rhode Island was the first state to go over the top in the 7th War Loan Drive. But these patriotic people are not getting enough to eat.

I have thought this thing over a long time. I am fed up and I can be still no longer. Under normal operations you know as well as I do that we can't expect any improvement in the present situation for many months. It will be winter before there is even a trickle to show. That is why I insist on some unusual measures now - it will have to be done and done soon. We can't afford to wait until winter.

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