

Price Stability

allowed, then my colleague's amendment could be a subamendment thereto. If the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Wellington-Grey is disallowed, then my colleague's proposed amendment could be an amendment to the main motion. Therefore, if Your Honour is not ruling at this point on the validity of the amendment that has been proposed, I hope it will be considered in order for my colleague, at the conclusion of his speech, to present his amendment subject to Your Honour's ruling on the first one.

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, as I understand it, it is your wish to consider the amendment of the hon. member for Wellington-Grey (Mr. Howe) as to whether it is in order. If possible, I would like to reserve my position on whether it is in order until that time.

I rise really on the question raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) simply to indicate my feeling that the procedure he requests of Your Honour is agreeable to me, namely, that Your Honour reserve decision on the amendment now before the House so that we may have the issues properly before the House for the purposes of debate—even if there has been no decision by Your Honour on the first amendment—and that the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) be allowed to move, as he apparently intends to do very shortly, another amendment.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, might I interpose that this matter could be very simply disposed of if the minister, having been greatly impressed by what was said by the hon. member for Wellington-Grey (Mr. Howe), by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), and in lesser vein what is being said by myself, would see fit to accept the amendment of my distinguished colleague and that which I understand is going to be proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow). This would simplify matters and show the minister to be the container of a great degree of common sense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Unless there is unanimous agreement to accept the suggestion made by the hon. member for Peace River, I think it would be wiser to follow the course of action suggested by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. There are one or two points I should like to clarify in my mind before ruling on the amendment, but that

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

would not preclude the hon. member for Winnipeg North moving an amendment at the conclusion of his remarks.

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Wellington-Grey concluded his speech and sat down while I was reading his amendment. You will recall that I endeavoured to ask a question which he said he would accept at the end of his speech. Would he now allow me to ask my question?

Mr. Howe: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Basford: The hon. member was very critical in saying that my department did not appear to be doing very much. In view of this I wonder why his party, the official opposition, in connection with the inordinately high price of pharmaceutical drugs allied itself with the international pharmaceutical bandits who were charging the high prices and caused a year's delay in the passage of legislation, as a result of which that legislation is only now becoming effective? Further, when we have legislation before the House which would give the department much greater powers to investigate and inquire under the Companies Act and deal with embezzlers, defrauders and those sorts of people, his colleague the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) is violently opposing the passage of the legislation, so that the department cannot acquire this power.

Mr. Howe: I certainly deny the allegations made by the minister, and I do not think it is fitting for a man in his position to make allegations of that type. Certainly the 11 per cent sales tax was taken off drugs, but did it have any effect? It did not, Mr. Speaker, for the simple reason that the inflationary pressures created by the government had eaten up this relief bit by bit until it represented no assistance, and drugs were no cheaper.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising to members of the New Democratic Party that the government brings forward the resolution proposed today by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford). When we get the kind of increases in the cost of living which we have had in Canada in recent years, and the kind of complaints which have resulted from them, the government must appear to do something even if it does not really intend to do something. So, we have a resolution proposing another parliamentary committee.