

consideration. We want the power to intervene to roll back prices; we want the power to prohibit price increases which cannot be justified and we want those powers invested either in a department of the government or in an agency established by the government.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the government must now ask parliament for that power and not wait until the clear evidence of unjustifiability is upon us, as it may be by the middle of next week. Let us get that power now for action when necessary. I expect there is a lot of room for action.

Surely the kind of proposal I have made here today and which our party has made consistently in the last 18 months makes sense. You control selectively by stepping in and stopping those increases which cannot be justified. You use the power granted by parliament to protect consumers and the public interest. You do it fairly, not indiscriminately; you do it selectively, not across the board, but with judgment and justice. You challenge the traditional right of the business community so ably represented by my hon. friends in the Conservative and the Liberal Parties. You challenge their traditional right to call the tune; you end the markup rip-off, the profiteering; you build some fair play into the marketplace.

I wonder if my hon. friends understand the meaning of the term fair play. You say to consumers, "the government is on your side". You stop the evasive shuffling to and fro on the government benches; you end the twittering game playing in the official opposition and you get on with the job of fighting inflation in a realistic and tough way. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it is the only way.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore (Mr. Grier) did not ask for additional time, because we would have been favourably disposed to granting it. He put forward such a favourable argument in support of our position that we would have allowed him to go on for quite a while longer.

● (1250)

It must have occurred to the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore as he spoke in support of his motion that the government holds the hon. member and his colleagues in contempt. He need only look at the government benches. Where is the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Gray)? Should he not be here when this most important motion is being debated? Where is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner)? Where is the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)? Where is the minister's parliamentary secretary? Which government supporters are present? I see the Minister of State (Mr. Haidasz) who is responsible for multiculturalism, the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer) and several other government supporters. That is a clear indication of the contempt in which the government holds members of the NDP, and rightly so. They have been prostituting themselves since the beginning of this Parliament. I cannot help but think—

An hon. Member: And where do the Tories stand?

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Mr. McGrath: I cannot help but think of the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore as being like a first-class passenger on the *Titanic*.

An hon. Member: Where are the Tories?

Mr. McGrath: He is going down, but going down in style.

An hon. Member: Feeling lonely? Who supports your party?

Mr. McGrath: I can assure the hon. member that we are not lonely. We have the majority of the people of Canada supporting us.

An hon. Member: Not according to the Gallup Poll.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: The hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore talked about the motion he moved in committee; he talked about the motion moved in the Committee on Food Prices. He wondered why we did not support his motion for giving the board power to roll back prices. Mr. Speaker, he read only part of his motion. He forgot to mention, for example, that the chairman of the board was to be replaced by a new chairman. That was part of the motion.

I will tell the hon. member that we did not support his motion then, nor will we support it now, because we have no confidence in the Food Prices Review Board and no confidence in this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: If we are to give any agency the kind of delegated authority the hon. member advocates in his motion, we will only give it to an agency, to a body, in which the members of the House have confidence. I submit to you that, like the people of Canada, the majority of members in this House, including the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore if he were honest with himself, do not have confidence in the chairman of the Food Prices Review Board or in the board itself.

Not only did the NDP move a motion in committee in November calling for the head of Mrs. Plumtre; the leader of that party last week, in a speech in Toronto, again called for Mrs. Plumtre's resignation. In addition, he called for the resignation of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Gray).

Mr. Hellyer: The party is totally inconsistent.

Mr. McGrath: In order to accommodate the leader of the NDP and the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore, my colleagues and I in the opposition yesterday put forward a motion in the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee whereby we would reduce the salary of the Chairman of the Food Prices Review Board to \$1. Where was the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore and where were his colleagues when that motion was put forward? They were where they always are, supporting this government. So, they come into this House and speak with forked tongues, and then wonder why we cannot support their motion.