

Increased Cost of Living

how in heaven's name are you going to control the income of the doctor, the lawyer, the architect, the engineer and the accountant? How does the hon. member for Don Valley propose to control the use of the increased profits of the corporations? When these people talk about incomes control, what they really mean is wage control because that is easy to impose. Organized workers negotiate in a glass bowl,—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: —in public, and if anybody wants to know what the increase is for the auto workers or the steel workers—

Mr. Alkenbrack: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member rises on a point of order.

Mr. Alkenbrack: I should like to ask the Leader of the New Democratic Party if he does not recall that federal price controls worked during the second great war and during the postwar period. Would he answer that question for me?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The question may be answered, but it really is not a point of order. The hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis).

Mr. Alkenbrack: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. There can be no point of order arising from the Speaker's ruling on a point of order. The hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis).

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I say that the wages of organized workers are public knowledge, and if you want to know about an increase all you have to do is get hold of the union or the employers concerned. The wages of the unorganized worker can also be controlled because the government would have the greatest ally in that area, namely an employer who would rather pay less than more.

Those who talk about incomes control are not being entirely honest because they are talking about something that cannot be imposed. What can and would be imposed is control of working people in this country. There are too many working people in Canada making the minimum, and some below the minimum necessary for a decent living, for us to accept the idea of controlling their wages.

I have only two or three minutes left, Mr. Speaker, but I want to make one final point. It is this kind of consideration, the impossibility, the unworkability, the injustice—in fact, the senselessness—of temporary freezes, and the injustices and inequities of a system of control as well as the impossibility of doing it in peacetime that has made us support the idea of a food prices review board and a prices review board generally. If the prices which people have to pay are fair in relation to increased costs, then people just accept that and live with it, but I suggest there is a measure of unfairness in the increased prices and a prices review board could find that out.

Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that Imperial Oil, followed by Shell and Gulf, increased the price of crude oil. Imperial Oil increased it on May 1 by 25

[Mr. Lewis.]

cents a barrel; that is a total of 55 cents a barrel since November, just six months, or a 20 per cent increase in the price of crude. Already that increase in the price of crude is being reflected in the increased price of gasoline to car owners. Again, this affects the farmers of Canada because the agricultural industry—although some members of this House may not know it—is the largest user of oil and energy in this country, as an industry. Pretty soon this increase imposed by Imperial and Shell and Gulf will be reflected in increased food prices because farmers' costs will increase as a result of it. Why were these prices increased, Mr. Speaker? Do we not have enough oil in Canada? Was there an increase in the cost of producing the oil? Not at all. They were increased in Canada because Imperial, Shell and Gulf can get a higher price outside this country. That is unfair to the people of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him, plus some extra, has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member may continue if there is unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I do not and I did not object to the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) finishing his statement. I am not the one who is stopping him.

An hon. Member: The Progressive Conservatives are.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): The Progressive Conservatives.

An hon. Member: That is correct.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): I am not surprised.

Mr. Lewis: I am not surprised either.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House today is of great importance to the whole country, and hon. members. In fact, it says:

That this House deplores the failure of the government to take concrete and effective action against the rising cost of living, so evident in the price of shelter, food and clothing; and therefore urges the government to impose an immediate temporary freeze so as to enable it to develop a satisfactory plan in conjunction with the provinces, industry and labour for the purpose of keeping the cost of living within acceptable limits.

● (1630)

Mr. Speaker, the day before yesterday I believe, I asked the Prime Minister whether he would recommend the hospitalization of the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Stanfield) for the purposes of a psychiatric examination. The leader of the opposition was in the Maritimes at the