

*Failure to Reduce Prices to Consumers*

which we do not pay very much in the parliamentary restaurant. I should like to refer again to the average fisherman in Atlantic Canada, and I am glad to see the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) here tonight because he will well remember what I am going to say. Last year we had what everyone thought was a very good program by which the average fisherman was guaranteed—Mr. Speaker this is a word we really love, “guaranteed”—that he would receive for his fish the average of the price that he had received in the previous three years. This is what he was guaranteed last year. So he received between 2 cents and 4 cents per pound if he lived in Valleyfield, Newfoundland and as high as 4 cents a pound if he lived in the more affluent parts of the province. This was the guaranteed price for his fish. If you look at the prices of this type of product on the market it is difficult to believe what has happened.

Again this year, everyone was delighted to find that the same fisherman would receive the same price for his fish that he had received in the previous three years. Forget about the increase in the cost of living, the increase in taxation and the increase in educational costs, they were to be guaranteed the same price they received in the past three years. So, he received this year between 2 cents and 4 cents a pound and as high as 4 cents a pound for his fish. Look at the price per pound of fish in the supermarket. You would never believe it. I tell you that you will look twice before you purchase it. It is a little difficult to believe. I looked this weekend and a pound of fresh Atlantic cod was selling for 75 cents a pound and a pound of fresh haddock was selling for \$1.25. Where is the money going? It is not going into the pockets of the fisherman because he is being literally so dehydrated economically that he will blow away. This is the situation with which we are faced. The money is not going into the pockets of the average Canadian fisherman. Something must be wrong. The minister sits there, but he spends \$16 million. The department says, “Come to Poppa”. We are coming to poppa, but poppa says he has no money. He has no power; he has nothing.

In this blue document I do not see one bit of evidence that anything is being done for the consumer. I see all kinds of people earning \$16,000, \$18,000, \$20,000 or \$35,000 working for the minister. There are all kinds of administrative costs. I should like to have hon. members look through this document. The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

(Mr. Allmand) has left his seat but is still in the house. I say to him that he should glance through it and see where the money is going. I do not see any evidence there of anyone in this department working to help the consumer. The minister is building a \$16 million empire for himself. I would like to have this \$16 million. As I said before, the country would save \$15 million and I would be a millionaire.

I could go on and talk about the cost of education. I went to university in 1956. I spent \$720. I did not drink any beer. I did not smoke any cigarettes. I purchased my books I studied and spent \$720. Two years later I spent \$1,500. In 1965 I was a student again. It cost me and my family—this is not a good statistic—approximately \$7,000. This year I doubt if the average Canadian student could get through university with less than about \$2,000. But the same student cannot find a summer job. If he does find a job he cannot earn enough money to buy his books and pay his tuition. Four hundred and fifty dollars is about the cheapest tuition fee you can find at a Canadian university. Again, if he does happen to get this \$450 he will end up having to obtain a student loan with the highest rate of interest. I could go on and tell the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs that we do have a problem in Canada. Frankly speaking, I do not see any great effort being made by the government. You can present it in black, white, green, red, yellow, orange or in any way you like to show that we have a problem but they shake their heads. They do not see it.

Perhaps we have a government so geared to the sophisticated thinking about the great contributor to party funds that they cannot see beyond this. Basically, I do not think this government identifies itself with the average Canadian. I do not mind not being able to solve a problem overnight, but I do mind when we have a government which does not have in mind the interests of the average Canadian.

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, during the course of the debate today, or at least that part of it which I had the privilege to hear, there has been a great deal of complaining on the part of the opposition about consumer prices but no mention of what they would support by way of action to come to grips with the problem.

**An hon. Member:** You are the government.