

Price Stability

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Even if that is true, Mr. Speaker, surely it applies only to that part of the amendment that has to do with the terms of reference. Nothing has been said today that questions the validity of that part of my colleague's amendment which suggests this should be a committee of this House only, rather than a committee of both Houses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am not sure what I should say about the contributions of hon. members. I make the point which I think is anticipated, if not obvious, to all hon. members. It is that essentially the same objections I had to the first amendment apply to part of the amendment presented by the hon. member for Winnipeg North. I quote section (c) of the amendment:

(c) by inserting in line three, after the word "appointed", the words "to inquire into and report upon the trends in the cost-of-living in Canada and factors which may be contributing to changes in the cost-of-living;"—

My objections to that are the same as the objections I had to the earlier amendment. I again refer hon. members to citation 291 of Beauchesne's fourth edition. However, there are other parts to the amendment. In considering that I must again quote Beauchesne, citation 293, toward the end of the citation. It reads as follows:

When an amendment is irregular in one particular, the whole of it is not admissible and must be ruled out of order.

I am therefore obliged to rule that the amendment before me is out of order. This does not preclude at a later date the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, if it is his disposition, moving an amendment which would contain those provisions of the present amendment, minus the section that I find objectionable. For these reasons I rule the amendment out of order.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): May I say on our behalf that we accept that course of action, namely, that if we wish to move the part that is not out of order, we can do so at a later stage. However, is it not also the prerogative of the Speaker to suggest from the chair that an amendment be altered so as to bring it in order? I wonder if Your Honour considered that the offensive part be eliminated and that the rest of the amendment stand? We are in Your Honour's hands. We are prepared to do it either way.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker: Frankly, I had not considered that option. I was not sure whether it was available to the chair. I suggest procedurally it might be more correct if the hon. member will follow the other course, namely, someone else from his group might move the amendment, minus the section to which I object, at a later stage.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We always do what Your Honour suggests.

● (5:40 p.m.)

Mr. William Skoreyko (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to have an opportunity to speak for a few minutes on the motion of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford). While I am dealing with the subject matter, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of questions I would like to pose.

I had the privilege of spending some time in the committee which studied the estimates of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I was at times disappointed in the attitude of some of the chief officers of that department who seemed to lack the answers, or were not prepared to give them to the committee. It appears the minister has now appointed more heads to this new department than one would normally find on a western ranch. Some 70 of them, I understand, are highly-paid officers. When members on a committee ask questions, one would think they would be entitled to get some kind of answer.

To a large extent the fault lies with the committee set-up; there is no way of exercising any pressure on a department or on its officials to ensure that answers are given. As long as I stay in this House I shall continue to fight to bring back into this chamber the study of departmental estimates by the whole House.

I believe the government is over-reacting to the issue of inflation. In this connection I for one, made alternative proposals to Dr. Young and others, proposals which they were not prepared to accept. Indeed, they were reluctant even to comment on them. One of the more serious difficulties facing this country is the shortage of housing. Some of us tried to deal with this question in the committee, with Dr. Young present, to determine whether any attempt had been made by the commission or by any other branch or agency of government to discuss with the municipalities what action the government should take in connection