

Increased Cost of Living

these problems but refers only to the fact that the government has failed to introduce policies to produce an equitable distribution of rising productivity.

It is a little surprising to find the house presented with this kind of an amendment by the New Democratic Party because only this afternoon, shortly after our proceedings commenced, hon. members of that party thought there was another matter of sufficient importance to set aside all other business of the house including this debate. They wanted to discuss the apparent failure of the Prudential Finance Company. When they are given an opportunity to refer to matters they allege are important we never hear a word from them about those matters. Instead they propose this platitudinous type of amendment which really does not mean very much.

Mr. Winkler: I am sure the hon. gentleman would be against anything members of the other opposition parties favoured.

Mr. Olson: Having listened to the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Grey-Bruce this afternoon in support of his amendment, I do not think many hon. members are going to place very much credence in the argument he now advances.

An hon. Member: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Olson: I will permit a question as soon as I progress far enough into my remarks to make it perfectly clear what I am referring to. In order to explain my position I will have to quote parts of the amendment placed before us this afternoon. In part it states:

—since the income of wage and salary earners has remained approximately the same and farm income has fallen as a proportion of the total national income over a period of years, this house regrets the failure of the government to introduce policies designed to produce an equitable distribution of rising productivity—

Several weeks ago the house saw fit to recognize the problem relating to the rising cost of living in Canada by referring the whole matter to a joint committee of this house and the other place. It seems that the members of the New Democratic Party are about seven weeks late in recognizing what other members of the house recognized at that time.

There is an element of truth in the literal definition of the words used in the amendment. If that were not so the committee of which I am proud to be a member would not have spent a great deal of time, sometimes as

many as four, five or six meetings a week, studying this problem. I have before me some of the evidence presented to that committee. Apparently the members of the New Democratic Party have not yet found time to give consideration to the very important evidence which was presented.

Many hon. members of this house including members of the N.D.P., the Conservative party and the government party, as well as members of the party to which I belong, have been seized with this matter and are proceeding with all convenient speed to get to the bottom of it and to recommend a solution to this house.

Table 5 in some evidence presented to the committee by the Department of Finance gives a clear statistical breakdown of our gross national product by income shares in current dollars. Item 6 of that table is headed "Accrued Net Income Of Farm Operators From Farm Production". I refer to this table because farm income has fallen in proportion to total national income. We knew back in September that this was true and this fact was presented very forcibly to the committee by the Department of Finance.

● (8:40 p.m.)

Let me refer to this item and the income percentages during the period from 1949 to 1965. It is apparent that farm income has gone up by only 1.7 per cent, whereas the gross national product by income shares for another item, wages, salaries and supplementary labour income, has gone up by 7.7 per cent. In making this comparison I am not suggesting that labour is getting too much, because there are some other items that are even higher. I am trying to show that there is no disagreement that farm income over this period of years has not kept pace with the increase in other sectors of the economy, the cost of production and so on.

We find that corporation profits before taxes during that 16-year period have gone up 6.6 per cent. Item No. 5 of this table, headed, "Rent, Interest And Miscellaneous Investment Income", has gone up 10.7 per cent. This is by far the largest increase of any item except the one that falls under the category of "Military Pay And Allowances". As you go through the other pages of the evidence you find the recurring position of investment income leading the list in the amount of increase that has been enjoyed percentage-wise over this 16-year period.

I think the committee is doing an excellent job. After it has reported to the house it will