

grant that committee. We would have been told from the different groups, and in many different ways, that, in dealing with a great problem—and I believe all are agreed that consideration of the cost of living is one of the greatest problems facing not only this country but the countries of the world today—the first necessary step to take was that of investigating the causes. We would have been told by hon. members opposite that that is the method physicians adopt when they seek to combat disease. I would point out to hon. members that the cost of disease is one of the factors which keeps higher than it otherwise would be the cost of living to families which suffer in that way. We would have been told by members of the legal profession that that is the method they adopt in seeking to solve the problems of their clients. They look first for the causes at the root of the trouble they are expected to remove. We would have been told by hon. members opposite that investigation into cause is one method scientists adopt in dealing with any question, no matter to what subject it relates. The first necessary step is to ascertain the causes of the trouble into which we are inquiring and to make those causes as clear to the public as possible. That is what the government is seeking to do.

The resolution before the house is a simple one, asking that a committee be formed to inquire into the causes of the high cost of living. It sets out one or two supplementary matters to help make clear the particular causes in which the public are specially interested, namely those relating to possible profiteering, hoarding and the like. Yet we have had all kinds of objections and all this week's debate with respect to the one request by the government, that the House of Commons join with it in doing the one thing which above everything else is necessary in dealing with this all-important question.

I made it clear at the outset that this was but one of the steps which the government was taking; I cited a number of instances of what the government had done already and I indicated that there were other things that the government intended to do. I said that this was to supplement other measures, not to be a substitute for any; that this was one additional means of helping to make clear what further steps there were that would assist in the solution of this problem.

That is a simple statement of what the house was asked to do. But what have we had from hon. gentlemen opposite in the way of acquiescing in that request? We have been forced to listen to a lot of declamation and ridicule; we have had to listen to many oppo-

rious epithets. We have had anger displayed by hon. gentlemen opposite; we have had threats of boycotting; we have had amendments moved to this simple resolution, and we have had appeals from the Speaker's rulings in regard to those amendments. On what grounds can these actions be defended? There is only one explanation that can be given. Hon. gentlemen opposite have recognized that this step which the government is taking is one which the people of this country want taken and want taken quickly. Because it has been taken by the government, they are doing all in their power to obscure the importance of that step. That is one explanation.

This motion was the simple matter of asking hon. gentlemen opposite to join with us in having a committee of the house appointed to investigate the causes of the great problem of the rise in the cost of living in which they, like us, are interested; but they have taken advantage of this opportunity to belabour the government for coming forward with a suggestion which, if any suggestion in the world would be helpful in meeting this serious problem, this one would be.

There are perhaps other reasons. After listening to the debate it has not been difficult to discover that the members of the three groups opposite have felt that this was a good opportunity—seeing that the government had promised to give a good deal in the way of latitude and the Speaker being asked not to rule too rigidly on the different points that might come up in an effort to keep the debate to one issue—to bring out their different policies. They have exploited their policies by using the time of parliament which should have been devoted to other subjects. They have endeavoured to make the public familiar with what they regard as important in their particular policies.

The amazing part of this whole thing is that their policies are as divergent as it is possible to have them. The minute it comes to the vital question of discussing the policies of hon. gentlemen opposite, that minute they begin to fight with each other like Kilkenny cats. They have no agreement whatever in the matter of policy, but when it comes to an opportunity, as they see it, of trying to embarrass the government they are ready to join hands and dance together merrily enough.

I hope that hon. gentlemen opposite will not think that the public are deceived by anything of the kind. The public have been watching their performance from outside the house with quite as much interest as I have from this side of the house. To me the week