

distribution of certain commodities throughout Canada. These protests have come largely from cooperative stores.

Mr. ILSLEY: I do not think a discussion of wartime prices and trade board orders is in order under this item. That would have been in order under the estimates of the wartime prices and trade board which were war estimates.

Mr. GILLIS: Strictly speaking they may not, but is not the wartime prices and trade board under the administration of the Department of Finance?

Mr. ILSLEY: Wartime prices and trade board is responsible to the Minister of Finance, but it is a war-time agency and its estimates are provided for separately from the permanent, peace-time, non-war appropriations for departmental administration. When the wartime prices and trade board estimates were before the committee hon. members had an opportunity to discuss everything connected with those orders, and as a strict point of order I think the time has gone by in this session for discussing them.

Mr. GILLIS: I am not going to press it. This is just a technicality, and I merely wanted to point out to the minister that there is considerable friction in the country on this very matter which affects the general public. Small stores are having to close up because they cannot get goods for their customers.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): I think the point of order is well taken. I direct the attention of the hon. member to standing order 58 which states:

Speeches in committee of the whole house must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: There are certain regulations with regard to the distribution of materials about which we are concerned in western Canada.

Mr. ILSLEY: On a point of order, that is exactly the same point. We must decide whether we are going into the wartime prices and trade board estimates again. If that is decided, we will go into them, but I do not think it would be in order.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): It is not in order.

Mr. BLACKMORE: It might be a considerable task for the chairman to outline exactly what is included in this item and be able to state what is relevant. I would like the minister to tell us the achievements of

Canada at the Bretton Woods conference. Up to the present time we have had no discussion on that world conference, which I think is one of the most important matters coming under the minister. It seems to me that this is a proper question to ask.

Mr. ILSLEY: I think I should answer that. The hon. member asks what were the achievements?

Mr. BLACKMORE: Yes. We have heard a lot about them but we have not had any report of any kind in parliament at all. I think this is the most important event of this year. There should have been a general statement, either by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance or some appropriate minister, but we have had no opportunity to discuss this matter to any degree in any way.

Mr. ILSLEY: Two long reports were tabled a day or two ago which embodied the proposals that were accepted by the delegates to the Bretton Woods conference. Those delegates were not appointed by the Department of Finance; they were appointed by the government of Canada. The delegation consisted of persons connected with several departments of the government, with the Bank of Canada, and it included some members of parliament. The agreements did not represent any commitments by the government of Canada, and they will have to be considered by the government before the decision with respect to them can be stated. In regard to the achievements of the Canadian delegation, all I can say is that by common consent they distinguished themselves by their outstanding qualifications and by the ability with which they approached the discussion of and decision on the various matters that came before the conference.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I am sure the committee would be gratified if the minister would give us a little more detail as to how they distinguished themselves. We would like to know whether they distinguished themselves in the interests of the dominion government or in the interests of some group of people outside Canada.

Mr. ILSLEY: That would be a matter of opinion and I do not know whether my hon. friend would agree with me.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): I think the hon. member should confine his remarks to this item.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Will the Chairman explain to what extent my remarks are not pertinent to this item?