

he receives and thus his income. I certainly hope this government will not take steps which will in fact reduce the return to our primary producers, namely, the farmers and fishermen.

• (2040)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Is the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) seeking the floor on a point of order or a question of privilege?

**Mr. Knight:** Mr. Speaker, would the minister entertain a question?

**Mr. Olson:** No, Mr. Speaker. There is not sufficient time. Our time is limited. However, if I have finished before my time is up, I will entertain a question by the hon. member.

**An hon. Member:** Chicken.

**Mr. Olson:** No, it is not chicken. These hon. members are not only interested in using their own time to spread this unfair kind of information they put forward; they want to pirate my time as well. Let us consider very briefly some of the commodities. What are they complaining about? Are they complaining about the price of pork? Are they complaining about the price of potatoes or the price of grain, fish, fruits and vegetables? If that is what they are complaining about I would remind them that all through 1971 the producers of pork in Canada received for it less than the cost of production. The government recognized this and made an offer of \$24 million in deficiency payments to make up the difference. Now these producers are getting some justice from the marketplace. Some members try to downgrade the fact that they are entitled to this.

Are they talking about poultry? The poultry producers of this country in my opinion are still receiving far too low a price for the eggs, broilers and turkeys they produce. Within the next few days we will be assisting them to correct this situation. I hope no one will come into this House and complain about the fact that they are finally receiving some justice from the marketplace. For far too long the primary producers, both farmers and fishermen—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister has another 30 seconds or so before the expiration of his allowed time. The Chair, and perhaps some hon. members, would like the opportunity to hear what he is saying.

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I say that the primary producers, both farmers and fishermen, of this country for far too long have been receiving an income which is less than the national average. It is substantially less than that which other sectors of the economy have received. The government will continue its efforts to improve this situation.

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great attention to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) who has just told us that primary producers in Canada do not receive the income which they deserve. This is not the purpose of this motion at all, but I noticed in passing that the minister said farmers would remember

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what the government had done. It is precisely because farmers remember that the government is afraid to call an election at this time.

Mr. Speaker, this does not mean that I support the motion presented by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis), which reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government has failed to cope with the problem of steadily rising food prices, which seriously affect Canadian living standards—

It has been said before that the high cost of living was not due only to the rise in food prices.

I quote again:

—or with the fact that supermarket profits have increased simultaneously at an unprecedented rate—

Mr. Speaker, it is true that the profits of supermarkets have risen considerably. However, it is also true that ten years ago, the total sales of supermarkets came up to \$100,000 per year, and that their profits were in the order of 10 per cent. In fact, it was rather millions of dollars, but let us only take as an example a figure of \$100,000.

Today, the sales of supermarkets are more than five times as much. This means that the sales of supermarkets come to over \$500,000, and even if the percentage of profits has diminished by about 3 per cent, they are nevertheless making higher profits, namely \$35,000,—that is 7 per cent of \$500,000—as compared with \$10,000. It is clear that profits have gone up because sales have been larger.

Mr. Speaker, the motion of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway contends that food prices have drastically increased; they have not increased more than in other sectors, a fact that the New Democrats are presumably prepared to acknowledge. However, I would have liked to find a concrete proposal in the motion. What to do then? Control prices? Nationalize supermarkets, as the New Democrats seem to suggest in their platform? Many countries have proceeded with the nationalization not only of supermarkets but also of flourishing industries which took nothing away from anybody but which allowed everybody to get something.

When I went to Czechoslovakia, I had the opportunity of visiting ghost plants—

**An hon. Member:** Here we go again!

**Mr. Caouette:** —the BATA plants, that used to manufacture footwear. I remember that in 1934, when BATA was a private enterprise, those plants could have supplied the whole world with shoes. But today those plants are closed down. The company no longer exists and the government was unable to keep up their production.

Mr. Speaker, there is an example of nationalization. Private enterprise was abolished and in so doing the wings of private personal initiative were clipped because, without ambition the individual dies—there is no doubt about that—and if hon. members of the New Democratic Party do not know that, let them look at what goes on in those countries they so often like to quote as examples; they will see exactly what happens.

However, are we going to suggest price controls? If we set up price controls, we might as well control wages—

**Mr. Benjamin:** Whose wages?