

on every \$100 of products sold. And I should like to see them try to do that in connection with all the essentials, at least. My suspicion is that they are just a bit afraid they are not going to be able to substantiate their charges, so now they are somewhat reluctant to see the committee set up. Well, here is their opportunity to make good on the charges they have been making.

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): They do not want to take it.

Mr. KUHL: I do not want to suggest there may not be what could be described as excessive and exorbitant profits by certain corporations, and I am not saying I support that; but the general impression left by C.C.F. speakers is that all private business is in the same boat, that they are all a bunch of bloated profiteers. I think the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Gibson) made a good proposition to the C.C.F. members the other day when he suggested—

Mr. McCULLOUGH (Assiniboia): I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question?

Mr. KUHL: All right; go ahead.

Mr. McCULLOUGH (Assiniboia): In the debacle which followed the removal of price controls last fall Mr. McLean admitted that a packing house firm made a profit of \$2,000,000. Do you consider that fair?

Mr. KUHL: That depends on so many factors. A broad statement of that kind does not mean anything. You have to take the figures in relation to other figures. I cannot go into all the details that are involved; it would be a long study. What I am concerned about is general principles.

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): And you stay with your principles.

Mr. KUHL: I was about to say that if it is so easy to make these profits; if there is so much money to be made, as is alleged by the C.C.F., why do they not accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni, pool their money and go into the packing business?

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): They haven't the nerve.

Mr. KUHL: They would probably go on the rocks.

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): Or the ability, either.

Mr. KUHL: If the committee does nothing more than bring out evidence to show the content of the prices of commodities, so that

[Mr. Kuhl.]

we can see whether exorbitant profits are causing the high cost of living, or whether there are other causes, then it will have been well worth while. Nevertheless I say the government has at its disposal now, plenty of facilities for finding that out for themselves. That is why in my opinion its action in setting up this committee is purely a process of delaying tactics, postponing the evil day, and not having the courage to face the issue at the present time. I am sorry if I appear unduly critical of what our friends of the C.C.F. have been saying, but I believe they deserve a good deal of criticism.

Mr. MOORE: Will the hon. member permit a question? I noticed that when C.C.F. members spoke on this subject they were definite about the sources from which they obtained their material, making special reference to the dominion bureau of statistics; the *Financial Post*, and other publications. Does the hon. member question those statistics?

Mr. KUHL: The value of statistics is often closely related to the interpretation placed upon them by the person using them.

Mr. KNOWLES: The hon. member did not hesitate to give statistics.

Mr. KUHL: We have all heard the statement that figures may not lie but liars figure. I am not imputing any motives to anyone, but I do say that quite often from the same set of figures two people may arrive at two different conclusions, depending upon the point of view of each. That is why I say that in setting up this committee it may not be possible to arrive at any definite conclusion; we may not know a great deal more after we have finished with it. However, all we can do is go as far as human limitations permit. Beyond that we cannot go.

One thing we should certainly try to do is to agree upon some fundamental principles. Principles are eternal, and surely we should try to reach unanimity of opinion on a few principles. If we succeed in that most of these other things will take care of themselves.

I have said that I am sorry to be so critical of our C.C.F. friends, but they are bidding for power in this country, and I am not prepared to give them any power. I do not want to give anybody any power. The people should control—not a few party politicians. It is about time the people of Canada found out that many of the charges the C.C.F. are making are just a lot of political hot air, without any substantiation, and it is possible that this committee will help to do that.

Mr. MacNICOL: Is not the expression "hot air" too mild?