

Increased Cost of Living

has been pointed out by the hon. member for Medicine Hat, the amendment makes little sense if we look at the record. Since this session, which opened in January, the government has introduced much legislation to help the lower income groups in our economy such as the Canada Assistance Plan which gives assistance to the sick, the blind, the crippled and the aged, the new amendments to the National Housing Act which will help people with lower incomes to purchase houses, the medicare program, and the Company of Young Canadians to help those in dire circumstances in Canada. The government has also set up the committee studying the cost of living. It is my opinion that the very working of the committee has had a corrective effect on the price structure up to now.

I think the fact that such a committee is sitting, calling witnesses and making companies reveal their records is having a corrective effect because it makes the people who set prices in the industry think twice before taking an undue profit at the expense of Canadian consumers. Statistics released at the end of October show that consumer food prices have decreased. I will not pretend that the immediate cause of the decrease has been the work of the committee, but I am fairly certain that the committee work has been one of the causes bringing about decreased food prices.

Contrary to what the amendment implies, if we compare the record of the government of this country with the records of other governments in other countries we shall see that we have been extremely effective in providing price stability and maintaining income. Despite this record the government is still not satisfied but wants to do even more.

Mr. Nasserden: May I ask the hon. member a question? In 1962 the President of the United States admitted that the record of price stability in the United States was second to that of Canada. If the table that has been referred to is correct, why is Canada's record now second to that of the United States?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, the tables I quoted from are taken from Dominion Bureau of Statistics figures and other official figures. It may be that the United States has a better record than we have, but compared with the other 25 countries on the table we stand second.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Acadia): Mr. Speaker, I rise without hesitation to take part in this [Mr. Allmand.]

debate and speak in support of the amendment which says in part that:

—this House regrets the failure of the government to introduce policies designed to produce an equitable distribution of rising productivity and national income among all groups in Canada, particularly in view of the rising cost of living.

The rising cost of living has alarmed many members of the house and many people across the country. The hon. member who just spoke compared the record of this country with that of other countries. He quoted the governor of the Bank of Canada to show that the present boom began in 1961 but he did not have to go to the governor of the Bank of Canada to say that. He could have gone to the Minister of Finance, to the former minister of finance, to the Minister of Transport or to any one of a number of ministers in the present cabinet who would have admitted readily that the boom Canada is now enjoying began in 1961. I want to make that absolutely clear.

Let us look at what happened in 1962. We all remember what John F. Kennedy said in 1962. He admired Canada because Canada led the world in maintaining a rapid growth in gross national product. We led the world in maintaining price stability in regard to the cost of living. Where is Canada today in that regard? The hon. member said we were second in line among 25 countries. In 1962 we were on top. We were the world leaders in maintaining stability in the cost of living. Now one need only look at any paper published anywhere in Canada within the last year to see where this country stands.

Mr. Allmand: May I ask a question?

Mr. Horner (Acadia): We are at the very top in promoting an increase in the cost of living. That is where we stand.

Mr. Allmand: May I ask a question? May I ask the hon. member where we stood on unemployment in 1961?

Mr. Horner (Acadia): I will get to unemployment in good time. Let us look at inflation. The hon. member admits that the cost of living in Canada has reached an all-time high. It has accelerated at a rate comparable with that of any country in the world. It is all very well for Canadians to realize that the cost of living has gone up but we as legislators should ask ourselves why this has happened. Why did we lead the world in 1962 in maintaining stability in the cost of living and yet lead the world in 1965 and 1966 in bringing about a situation where the cost of living is rising at a