

We are concerned about increasing food prices and the increase in inflation. I have said before that if the hon. member or anyone else has evidence that some increased prices are due to price-fixing or rigging the marketplace, I would be very pleased to put our team of people from the competition bureau to work on that.

Mr. Paproski: That is your job.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, it is the minister's department that is supposed to be investigating this matter.

Mr. Paproski: That is why he is there.

Mr. Broadbent: This is why he has to pay civil servants to do it and not members on the opposition side. The minister just indicated that the profit figures in retailing were not out of line. I point out to him that the report put out by the AIB indicates retail profit increases were indeed higher than the period 1971 to 1977, so these profits were abnormally high. I wish the minister would check his own data on that.

REQUEST THAT STEEL PRICE INCREASES BE ROLLED BACK

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to another sector, the steel industry. Considering that all three major firms announced over the weekend an increase in their prices by about 7 per cent, coming on top of other price increases of 6 per cent or 7 per cent announced just three months ago, and considering that profits for the three companies are up 45 per cent, year over year, from 1977 to 1978, will the minister now practice what he preaches and ensure that these companies effect rollbacks in steel price increases so that consumer durables, automobiles and a whole range of other items will not escalate out of sight in price during 1979?

● (1425)

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): First, Mr. Speaker, with regard to food, the hon. member should read once more the AIB report which was published yesterday. While there are reports of increased profits in some areas, they also report some lower profits, especially in the third quarter of last year.

With regard to steel, a week or so ago I asked officials in my department to analyse steel price increases in their analysis of the situation in the steel industry. I have not yet received that report from them.

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HEALTH AND WELFARE

OBJECTION TO MANNER OF ADVERTISING CHILD TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Protests are coming to members from across the country

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against the objectionable television advertising that is sponsored by the minister promoting the child tax credit bill. This advertising is presented in a lifestyle form and is creating pressure on parents, especially low income parents. Apart altogether from the political, partisan overtones of the ad—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: —and I think it is shameful, it is in fact misleading. Does the minister intend to withdraw it from television and, if not, why not?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, if the government had the money, I would ask for \$1 million to have the ad shown three times as often.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss Bégin: I challenge the hon. member to read the text of the ad to this House, a copy of which has been given to his party, and to read the description of the video part as well and give us an example, direct or indirect, of partisanship, because there is none in the ad. The ad tells Canadian parents, mothers in particular that there is a new credit from which 75 per cent of Canadian mothers will benefit partly or fully, and that they have to apply for it. That is what the ad does. I wish we could have more money.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, the minister does not realize the visual impact of this ad, showing a family in a lifestyle with a middle income background which will create undue pressures on low income families, many of whom already have a difficult time managing what the ad presents as a windfall gain. Even though the object is to explain how to obtain the child tax credit, which is commendable, the way the minister is going about it will create social hardships on families.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: I suggest if hon. members opposite saw this ad, they would know exactly what I am talking about and perhaps might even share my concern. Members are getting protests from across the country about this objectionable advertising. Will the minister withdraw it from television?

Miss Bégin: The answer is no, Mr. Speaker, and each free time slot I am able to get, I will use. I would like the hon. member and everyone else to know that we have more copies of the ad which can be used on cable TV and other types of community television. I would say that the members of the Conservative party have a problem with their emotions and sensitivities; they are always in the wrong place. They are all mixed up in their ideology when it comes to women, by the way.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!