

Increased Cost of Living

the two amendments. The minister has spent considerable time quoting words which are on the periphery, but the words of the two amendments are as follows—I shall give one first and then the other. In the case of the amendment of March 21, 1966, found at page 2947 of *Hansard*, the operative words are:

—the government has failed to act effectively to hold down the cost of living and to halt inflation—

With regard to the amendment now proposed by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, the operative words are:

—this house regrets the failure of the government to introduce policies designed to produce an equitable distribution of rising productivity and national income—

I submit, Mr. Speaker, both to you and to the Minister of Public Works, that these are quite different concepts. In the case of the March amendment, we were concerned about the government's failure to hold down the cost of living. The present amendment regrets the government's failure to produce an equitable distribution of rising productivity. I think your initial judgment, Mr. Speaker, that there was a very real difference between the March 21 amendment and this one is correct. I suspect that the Minister of Public Works agrees with me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order; perhaps in comparing the motion of March 21 and the motion of today one might note that the motion of March 21 actually dealt with the rising cost of living. I suggest to the house that the last line of this particular amendment rather relegates the cost of living to the position of something needless to the motion. That is one reason I think the two motions are a little different. Again, the motion presented to the house today deals with the distribution of rising productivity and national income. I believe these two motions are sufficiently different that the motion of today is not in serious conflict with the one moved on March 21. I, therefore, declare the motion to be in order.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. Ron Basford (Vancouver-Burrard): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the New Democratic Party has moved an extremely important amendment and one which I hope the house will spend some time debating rather than just passing it as the New Democratic Party has now requested.

[Mr. Knowles.]

• (5:20 p.m.)

In effect, the amendment is calling for an incomes policy for Canada, and it would be deplorable if such a policy were adopted or rejected without proper discussion in the house. I hoped I might be able to speak to the amendment with a great deal more preparation than I have been allowed in these circumstances.

The amendment reads:

That all the words after the word "that" be struck out and that the following words be substituted therefor:

"since the income of wage and salary earners has remained approximately the same and farm income has fallen as a proportion of the total national income over a period of years, 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."

I did not hear all the speech of the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) because I was in my office. But I did hear the last part of his remarks in which he suggested that the rising costs which we have experienced of late have been due primarily to the increasing rate of profits. I heard him discuss car prices and allege that those high prices were due solely to the rate of profit being obtained by the car manufacturers.

I, for one, am getting a little fed up with the sort of discussion we have heard in Canada over the last six or eight months, with one group saying that rising costs and inflationary pressures are all due to rising profits and greedy capitalists, and another group saying that rising costs and increased prices are all due to increased wage demands. I do not think the answer is quite as simple as the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam alleges it to be. I recall the hon. member for Royal (Mr. Fairweather) saying in an earlier debate on this subject, "A plague on both your houses," and I am inclined to agree with him.

What we should be concerned with is not blaming one group or another group, as the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam and his party try to do, but with seeking answers to what has caused and contributed to the rise in the consumer price index and to increasing costs over the last 12 months, and more particularly over the last few months.

As the house knows, in his financial statement on September 8 the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) announced that the government was very concerned about the increases in the consumer price index that we were then witnessing, and as a matter of fact still are.