

anything short of giving this board the powers that it needs. That can be done and must be done. Merely because we cannot see all the way through the thicket does not mean that we should not make a start in this area. We must make a start.

Undoubtedly there are some who want to leave things to the workings of the marketplace. I am talking of people like the Minister of Agriculture. That view, I suspect, is also held by some other members of the cabinet, including the affable, knowledgeable and able Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what such action would mean today. If you leave these things to the workings of the marketplace it will mean leaving the consumer at the mercy of some large and powerful corporations who will first destroy their weaker competitors and then be in a position to demand from the consumer every cent that the traffic will bear. Those who were on the food prices committee know that and they will be even more aware of this fact when we resume our sittings in a short while.

People must have food in order to live. Consequently, the food industry is highly profitable if you consider it in its entirety. Anyone who doubts that should look at the profits of the great corporate structures underlying the supermarkets and some of the other sectors of the food industry. No wonder prices are going up: profits are going up and profits are there to be reaped.

As long as the food gamblers can sell their wares at a profit, it matters not a whit to them who gets hurt in the process, whether it is the farmer whose existence is threatened by the rising cost of machinery and farm supplies, the low-income families whose children cannot get proper nutritional food, or the middle-income families who are brainwashed, along with the rest, into buying all sorts of things they neither want nor need because of the wasteful ingenuity of those servants of the supermarket, the advertisers. I have noticed that according to press reports advertisers are beginning to worry. They are becoming sensitive because people no longer believe many of their claims about the wares the supermarkets display. They are now saying that they must improve their image.

The purpose of the food prices review board is that of taking a first, real step to transform the food industry from its present status of a gambling venture into what it should be, an industry to supply the needs of people for food at the lowest cost consistent with quality and with the protection of those who are involved in food production, the most vulnerable of whom at the moment are farmers.

Water has always been a public utility. It has been regarded as too important a substance to be cornered by one or two big monopolies for their own private profit. I am glad to say that there is one provincial government that is beginning to look at food a little in that light. The government of British Columbia is beginning to supply the co-operative movement, regarded as an enemy by the great monopolistic private food chains, with funds to build up a co-operative, non-profit alternative to the gambling food chain business which is so deeply rooted in the country in which we live. I am glad to see that this beginning has been made.

May I have two or three more minutes, Mr. Speaker?

Increased Cost of Living

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has three minutes. If it is after six, I would assume hon. members would want the hon. member who has the floor to complete her remarks.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver Kingsway): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suggest that the minister look at this board in a way completely different from that in which he has so far viewed it. Consumers have become aware, as the minister no doubt knows, that committees which sit too long merely involve procrastination. Their establishment often means that decisions are put off and that a whitewashing job is done. People will not put up with that any more. I hope the minister realizes that if he does not act there will be retribution. If retribution does not come about in this House, he and those associated with him will suffer that retribution at the hands of the people across this country who trusted this government to do something in solving the problem of food costs. Those costs are part of the cost of living which people must bear. People must have food in order to live. If the government betrays the trust of the people, it is doomed no matter whether it receives the *coup de grâce* in this House or at the hands of the voters.

Mr. Speaker: It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume this debate at eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, some 2,500 years ago a Greek philosopher was attributed a statement he once made to the effect that he knew that he didn't know. Presumably it was Socrates who pronounced it. I would like to borrow that statement from him tonight in approaching this subject, because it is of such complexity that it makes one realize very quickly the limits of one's knowledge in attempting to come to grips with it.

I would rather have listened for the duration of the debate. However, the speech made at the opening this afternoon by the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) touched upon certain aspects and this has prompted me to respond to what he said.

In his speech, the hon. member for Don Valley emphasized the importance of introducing a freeze. He called it an "immediate temporary freeze." He mentioned 90 days. It is this kind of conflict to which I take strong exception. What does it mean? Expressed in those terms, it is truly a Conservative philosophy. It says to society, those who are trying to catch up in their income and standard of living with those who have made it, "Stay where you are and accept the fact that for a certain period of time you will not be able to catch up with the rest of society."

Who will be hit? Who is going to suffer? Who is going to be affected by a freeze of the kind proposed through this motion of the Conservative party? It is the working poor, the unorganized worker and the organized worker earning less than \$80 a week, such as a hospital worker. It affects