

The CHAIRMAN: I think the words used in the rule are "referred to". The rules of the house prevent an hon. member from referring to a debate on another subject.

Mr. ILSLEY: On the point of order, there is still another ground; the hon. member is referring to the terms of another resolution on the order paper.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order if he is referring to the terms of another resolution. In any event he is referring to another debate.

Mr. KNOWLES: I was speaking about price control, and I wanted to refer to the price of one commodity, namely, butter. An announcement was made yesterday in this house that the ceiling on the price of butter had been increased to permit an increase in the price of ten cents per pound. I have before me a government publication put out by the Minister of National Health and Welfare which contains statistics showing that the average consumption of butter by families in this country is 2.3 pounds per week, the average family in this case being four persons. The announcement made yesterday afternoon means that twenty-three cents per week, effective immediately, will be taken away from the average family. I was trying to compare that with the nineteen cents a week which was given to a married man with two children earning \$150 a month according to the announcement made in this house the night before last, effective two months hence.

It is that sort of thing—nineteen cents to be given two months hence and twenty-three cents to be taken away immediately—that presents this parliament with the issue which is summed up in this amendment. Are we satisfied to let the government go on with its headlong policy of price decontrol, or do we want in the name of the Canadian people to put some kind of brake upon that policy? I have in mind as well the fact that half the wage earners in Canada are in income brackets where they do not pay any income tax at all. They do not get even nineteen cents increase in their net income, but they have to pay this increased price which will amount to twenty-three cents a week, and that comes all at one crack.

I could discuss other items, but I am not going to—

Mr. MACKENZIE: Hear, hear.

Mr. KNOWLES: —for the simple reason that I want that one to stand out, if I may say so, to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, because there is the issue put clearly by what has happened in the house in the last two

days. I call upon hon. members to accept the opportunity which has been given to us by the Minister of Justice for a free vote, and pass this amendment as an attempt to put a brake upon the government with regard to its headlong policy of price decontrol.

Mr. ILSLEY: If my hon. friend is putting his amendment on the ground that he is condemning the policy of the government, I certainly will vote against it; but I stand by what I said, that any hon. member can vote exactly as he wishes on this amendment. I do not accept for one minute the meaning of an affirmative vote that the hon. gentleman gives to it. By his language he is attempting almost to turn this into a vote of censure, and that is not my understanding of what the effect of this vote would be. The only reason I am accepting this, if the committee wants to do it—and I am not going to vote for it myself, because I do not see that it accomplishes a thing—is that it does not make any practical difference in the situation, and the matter of good faith will not come into it at all. We feel that we must have some freedom in the matter of decontrol. If the amendment goes through, we shall accept our responsibility, just as we shall if it does not. The administration of the orders may go on just as it has in the past. I have defended and now defend the policy which the government is following. I know my hon. friend's view is that we are proceeding too rapidly. Many other hon. members of the committee say that we are proceeding too slowly. We think we are proceeding about in the way in which we should proceed. I have full cognizance of my hon. friend's views in the matter, but I cannot accept his advance interpretation of what the result of this free vote will be.

Mr. KNOWLES: I have just one other word to say, and it is this. Speaking on this matter a few days ago the minister said that support of this amendment would be commendation of the work of the wartime prices and trade board. Perhaps he used the word "affirmation" but at any rate it was in that tone. If the passing of this amendment expresses confidence in the work of the wartime prices and trade board in regard to price controls, then it can be inferred that we are asking for the continuation of the good work it did during the war years.

Some hon. MEMBERS: No.

Mr. ZAPLITNY: I wish to say just a word or two. There is a ground on which this amendment is particularly important. It is not as trivial and as simple a matter as the Minister of Justice seemed to imply in what