

*Increased Cost of Living*

I will not go on much longer except to say that this matter is now under study by resolution of this house. I hope that before long the committee will make an interim report to the house dealing, in the first instance, with the price of food. Perhaps the committee will be able to establish whether there is anyone along the line from the producer to the consumer who is taking an unconscionable profit, and if they do find this I hope they will make recommendations which the government will accept. We must not interfere with the direct relationship between effort and reward, but we must also recognize the monopoly of an enterprise which may have developed in Canada in the field of food distribution. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Cameron) knows very well that all parties in this house agree that there is a need for political action to be taken against economic monopolies. This in no way violates the principle I have enunciated respecting the relationship between effort and reward.

● (8:50 p.m.)

May I say in closing that it seems to me we are wasting our time talking about a matter which has already been referred to a committee for examination. There are many important pieces of legislation on the order paper and in my opinion the government is remiss in giving priority to particular legislation. To spend two days in discussing a matter on which there is no disagreement regarding the literal definition of the words and on which no conclusion can be reached as a result of the debate seems to be a waste of time. I hope the New Democratic Party will spend a little time reading the evidence which has been placed before the committee dealing with this matter and will take cognizance of the fact that this house has already dealt with this matter in the best way it could, namely, by referring it to a joint committee of the two houses.

Perhaps the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands can answer a question, because I noticed he attempted to get the floor just before me. How is it that the matter of the Prudential Finance Company was not so important at five o'clock although at 2.30 p.m. it was important enough to warrant setting aside all the other business of the country? I cannot understand this kind of reasoning unless the hon. member's party wanted to make political hay out of some of the platitudes contained in this amendment. Perhaps he knew perfectly well that the motion under standing order 26 was going to be set aside. This is what is called "shotgun politics"; with

one shot at several targets you get a few of them at the same time.

I am very pleased to say that the house, and that includes all parties, has already dealt with this matter and I think it is time that the New Democratic party read some of the evidence.

**Mr. Schreyer:** May I be permitted to direct a question to the hon. member for Medicine Hat? He chides us for making reference to the high cost of living because, as he states, this matter is now being considered by a committee of this house. I would ask him whether he considers the problem of those people who are on fixed incomes and those who live on Canadian farms in relation to the rising cost of living to be a matter of platitudes?

**Mr. Olson:** The word "platitude" in the context in which I used it, and I think the definition of that word will bear me out, is something that is repeated over and over again. Everyone is concerned about the problem, and genuinely so, but I am saying that something positive has already been done by the house to try to get to the bottom of the problem and to make recommendations toward solving it. To make a motion of this kind, after what has already been done, fits the literal definition of the word "platitude".

**Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few comments on the remarks made by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) this afternoon when he introduced his amendment. He criticized the government severely, as the amendment states, for failing "to introduce policies designed to produce an equitable distribution of rising productivity and national income." Furthermore, he criticized the government for failing to maintain stable prices and he said that prices in Canada are beyond all control.

I wish to take issue with these statements of the leader of the New Democratic Party, and in doing so I will refer to a table which was filed with the joint committee studying consumer prices, the committee to which the hon. member for Medicine Hat referred. This table can be found at page 556 of the reports of that committee. According to the table, in the period from 1958 to May, 1966 Canada had the second best record for price stability. In this period the consumer price index in Canada went up only 15 per cent while the United States had the best record with 12 per cent. However, if we look at other countries listed in the table we see, for example, that in