

The Prime Minister

minutes to get my party. Now, this is a private enterprise, and the hon. member cannot appreciate the services supplied by private enterprise. He is always ready to knock it in an effort to turn the people against it but when the time comes to pay for the services, he is reluctant to do so.

Mr. Speaker, what is worse still, is the fact that Quebec Hydro has just increased its electrical rates. And that company is indeed a government agency. Have members of the New Democratic Party been heard protesting against tariff increases by Hydro-Quebec, the Ontario Hydro or the Manitoba Hydro? No. That is right, that is logical and understandable. If private enterprise says: We are prepared to improve our service, there are protests. And yet the hon. member for York South will agree that Bell Canada provides the best telephone service not just in this country but in the whole world.

Mr. Speaker, did the hon. member for York South protest when the salaries of members of parliament were raised from \$18,000 to \$26,000? No.

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Never! He voted for it, just like the others.

From what they say, Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats would have us crush, mutilate and stamp out private enterprise. That is just what would be needed for socialism to develop and make an impact.

Mr. Lewis: That is your opinion, but I—

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Yes and it is exactly in line with what the hon. member for York South was saying just now.

But I said at the start that there are laws against monopolies and trusts. If Bell Canada, or any other company, is shamelessly exploiting the population, or trying to, there are laws to prevent it.

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Pelletier), for example, states, and I quote:

The government has decided to suspend the decision pending clarification from the commission and completion of the review.

Now, the Canadian Transport Commission has heard Bell Canada's request, and has studied it. And so I find it hard to understand the government now "playing at politics", falling into the socialist trap to obstruct initiative and prevent private property developing in Canada, while promising the people better service.

[English]

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It relates to the announcement of the suspension by the cabinet of the Bell Canada rate increases. My question of privilege is that this is a discriminatory act on the part of the government, because that self-same government permitted Northland Shipping (1962) Company Limited, which is in a monopoly position, to impose a 7 per cent freight rate increase for its services on the north coast of British Columbia. It approved that, and I simply ask it to be fair. How about suspending the Northland Shipping freight rate increase as well?

[Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue).]

Mr. Speaker: Of course, that is not a question of privilege. I hope the hon. member would not expect the Chair to make a ruling in any event.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**COST OF LIVING INCREASE—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION**

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 43 on a matter of the utmost urgency concerning the continual staggering increases in the cost of living. Food and shelter costs have risen .4 per cent in the past month and 11.3 per cent and 6.8 per cent respectively in the past year. The impact of the sharp rise in food costs affects all Canadians, but in particular those living on low and fixed incomes who are finding it increasingly impossible to afford a nutritionally adequate diet. In light of the seriousness of this matter, Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence):

• (1130)

That, given the continual rise in the cost of living and the consensus now existing in the country, the government immediately implement a freeze on wages and prices and act during this time to formulate long-term policies to halt or alleviate these disastrous increases in the cost of living.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that I hope the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his colleagues—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McGrath: —will agree to this.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Hon. members have heard the motion proposed by the hon. member under the terms of Standing Order 43. This motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent. The motion cannot be put.

FOOD PRICE INCREASES—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask leave of the House for unanimous consent to introduce a motion under the provisions of Standing Order 43. In view of the fact figures released today show that the food price index rose 11 per cent in the past 12 months, and in view of the fact that consumer groups, including Women Against Soaring Prices, have repeatedly called for a price review board, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes):

That this House instructs the government to introduce immediate legislation to implement the recommendation of the committee on food prices to establish a prices review board with all the powers necessary to deal with food costs, including the power, where necessary, to order a rollback in prices.