

**Mr. Gilbert:** The previous speaker referred to co-operatives. We have two types of co-operatives in this country, discount co-operatives and consumer co-operatives. City fellows like myself have only been exposed to consumer co-operatives. We find that consumer co-ops have patronage dividends in an attempt to help the producer reduce his price, but they have not been successful in the cities. Probably the reason they have not been successful can be related to the pressure of the large chain stores.

**An hon. Member:** Be careful now, John.

**Mr. Gilbert:** Recently, co-operatives have taken a new approach to the problem by putting on a direct service charge for the service rendered.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger):** Order, please. It is very hard for the Chair to follow the speech of the hon. member. The speech is not being made in my mother tongue, but I am attempting to learn the English language and when hon. members conduct themselves as they do it is difficult for the Chair to follow the debate.

**Mr. Gilbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure hon. members to my right are attempting to assist in their usual kind way. I enjoy their banter as it stimulates my thinking, and wisdom usually comes from the clash of ideas.

To get back to co-operatives, they now have the idea that there should be a direct service charge for services rendered. They have experienced almost instant success in these efforts in different cities across the country, more especially those in the maritime provinces as well as in Oshawa, Toronto and Hamilton. It has been pointed out that these co-operatives have received financial assistance in many cases from trade unions. It seems to me that the committee should delve deeply into the possibility of encouraging co-ops in their efforts in this important field.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) has indicated the experience of the United States, England and Sweden in respect of prices and wage control. I think we should give some time in the committee to a study of this matter. One would be foolish to adopt the methods and techniques adopted by these countries but we should not ignore them. We in the NDP want the fullest study possible on effective controls which might result in lower food costs to Canadians, always keeping in mind that at this stage the farmer is not getting for his produce a fair share of the food dollar.

The previous speaker was critical of labour costs as they relate to price increases. Let me point out to him that less than 35 per cent of all Canadian labourers belong to trade unions. Many people working in the labour market are completely unprotected in respect of bargaining for wages and working conditions. To place the blame on the trade union movement as the hon. member has done indicates that his sympathy lies with the corporate giants which in many ways and on many occasions contribute substantially to the political party he supports.

It is for the reasons I have outlined that we in the NDP will support this motion. I note the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) looking over with some scepticism about our

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support of this motion. I would repeat to him what was said by members of our party this afternoon. We were disappointed in the Minister of Finance when he conducted a survey of food companies and chain stores after the election, inquiring of them whether they would be agreeable to a study being made. That is not worthy of the Minister of Finance; I think he is more progressive.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** What do you base that on, John?

**Mr. Lewis:** That is what I would like to know.

**Mr. Gilbert:** I thought the minister might have been concerned enough about Canadians to bring this matter immediately to their attention with recommendations that would result in lower food prices.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, for these reasons we in the NDP will support this motion. We hope that the Liberal members of the committee will have the determination and vigour to pursue these matters and bring forth recommendations which will result in lower food costs for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Stollery (Spadina):** Mr. Speaker, it being the first time I rise to speak in this House, I would like to wish you, as the other speakers have done before me, all possible success in the performance of your duties in these difficult circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to say a few words in support of the motion which is now before the House.

[*English*]

**An hon. Member:** He doesn't look like Perry Ryan.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** It doesn't sound like him, either.

**An hon. Member:** Thank God!

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Stollery:** This is a motion that is consistent with the direction of the Speech from the Throne as well as the spirit. If my addition is correct, I am the fifty-first member to speak on this subject. I suggest that if there is any real interest in launching this committee, the motion should be passed with the least possible delay, certainly after a debate less wordy than the debate we have had so far.

• (2040)

The rapid rise in food costs since last summer has been of serious concern to Canadians everywhere. In fact, the whole mysterious business of food prices occupies a unique position in the economy, one that seems to be least understood. For example, why do various chain stores have such a disproportionate rate of profit? According to the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), who made some very pertinent remarks last night in my opinion, IGA showed a profit after taxes of 6.7 per cent, whereas Dominion Stores showed a profit of 11.2 per cent.

**An hon. Member:** Which year was that?