

*Cost of Living*

government and this Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) to date have done nothing to mitigate the inflationary spiral.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate because a number of my good friends and colleagues in all parties have been anxiously waiting for me to speak.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Benjamin: I have sat in this chamber most days since January 4. I have heard the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and a number of his colleagues recite on numerous occasions the requirement for a 90-day freeze on wages and prices *ad nauseam*. When I first began to be active in politics, these were the people who said it would be terrible to have a socialist, NDP or CCF government because they would be in favour of state control. The people who led in those kinds of arguments were many of my friends in my province, members and supporters of the Conservative party. I find that particularly ironic in this day and age. They were the ones who held up their hands in horror at the very thought of controls on prices, profits and wages. What is equally ironic, and I admit this quite readily, is that some years ago I also thought that was some kind of solution.

Having read and heard of the bitter experience of parties of all political stripes, from communist to fascist, free enterprise to democratic socialist, every one you can imagine in all parts of this globe, I find it ironic when listening to the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues who have been talking about controls since January 4. I intend to send to the office of the Leader of the Opposition pages from issues of a very radical publication over a period of some eight weeks this past summer. I am being facetious when I say it is radical. For many years, this magazine has been a supporter of, in the best sense of the word, "free enterprise and the capital system". It is a supporter of conservatives in North America, a supporter of the republican party and President Nixon. Tomorrow or Monday I will send to the Leader of the Opposition all the Xerox copies I have of what this radical publication called *Time* magazine says about 90-day freezes, price controls and phases one, two, three and four implemented by a republican conservative government headed by Richard Nixon. This magazine is noted for its refusal to recognize any kind of operation other than that endorsed by conservatives, small and large "c", both north and south of the 49th parallel for the past several decades.

I heard the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) say to members opposite, "For God's sake, go." I will buy that, provided you go with them.

● (2340)

An hon. Member: Let's all go.

Mr. Benjamin: I heard the Leader of the Opposition say it was time to remove this government from office.

Some hon. Members: Amen!

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

Mr. Benjamin: I will say not only "amen" but "hallelujah, brother!"

Mr. Baker: I had a tom cat who was as consistent as you.

Mr. Benjamin: I have been working against the Grits for almost as many years as all those fellows opposite me are younger than I am. I can say "hallelujah", except when I look to my right and see the Leader of the Opposition presenting himself to me as an alternative. When he talks about a 90-day freeze and about controls, he also says he intends to perpetuate the present economic system. For an ordinary stubble-jumper like me it is an awful choice to have to make. It is not really a choice. To choose between the Grits over there and these Tories over here is enough to give a coyote the heartburn. I am trying to put this in as polite language as I can.

Mr. Mazankowski: Think of the coyotes.

Mr. Benjamin: I say that because I am in full sympathy with the coyotes when it comes to considering these alternatives.

Mr. Kempling: They voted for you last time.

Mr. Benjamin: I have coyotes in my constituency who are far smarter than Grits or Tories.

An hon. Member: Or you.

Mr. Benjamin: The Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues have talked about controls and a 90-day freeze. If they would like to entice me, and possibly my hon. friends, to support their position they might elucidate precisely what they mean by freezes and controls. Earlier today the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) made a slip of the tongue and spoke of wage and price controls. I should like to ask him and others in the official opposition: On what wages, and why wages?

Mr. Paproski: That is about the dumbest thing you have said yet.

Mr. Benjamin: Would they also tell me what farmers are to be subject to controls, and why farmers? I will appreciate it if the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) would explain this to me satisfactorily.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): I sure will.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): He was not going to speak.

An hon. Member: He is talking but he is not saying anything.

Mr. Benjamin: We have experienced controls and wage freezes before, during wartime, and under the price and wage board in 1941 or 1942. We can learn from the experience of governments in other countries, too. On every occasion when this kind of economic procedure has been followed, the first people to get kicked in the face were the farmers and wage-earners. If the Leader of the Opposition would provide the House with a specific commitment that his version of controls and freezes means he would start at the top and work down, he would get my support.