

The Address—Mr. Trudeau

system, appropriate to a society seeking to control change in the most effective manner. The government has applied such selective measures in the recent past to milk, bread, oil and some petroleum product and we will not hesitate to use other counter-inflationary measures as they become necessary.

We will not hesitate to go after the so-called big guys in the marketplace if action is necessary to protect the Canadian consumer. The people of Canada know that it was a Liberal government and a Liberal minister which secured from the powerful oil industry a freeze on the price of oil and petroleum products. It was a Liberal government which imposed the export tax on oil, ensuring that the people of Canada have received so far over \$300 million that otherwise would have gone to the oil companies, the big guys, as windfall profits.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: The Tories say they would apply a 90-day freeze to incomes and prices and during that time they would look for less drastic and more permanent measures. Mr. Speaker, this has been the siren song of the Leader of the Opposition ever since the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) reversed his stand last February.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Prime Minister if he will forgive me because I have to leave this chamber to keep an important commitment. I assure him I will not ignore the speech. I will read with great interest the rest of his speech.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the Leader of the Opposition told us on this side that he had a commitment and he would have to leave at this time. I certainly understand the circumstances of his leaving as I, on several occasions, have had to leave in the middle of speeches made by the leaders of various other parties. I, too, had longstanding commitments to keep, so that his leaving is understandable. I just hope that when he is at the \$100 per plate dinner tonight at Toronto he will not complain about the disincentive to work which is created by unemployment insurance benefits.

I was saying that for several months we were prepared to listen with interest to what the Tory Party, if it ever formed the government, would do after the 90-day freeze was over. Surely after a year we should be entitled to know what is going to happen after the 90 days. Surely this is the best demonstration possible of their inability to spell out effective, long-term solutions.

• (1640)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: We are all in favour of a 90-day study period if you do not know what is going to happen after it, but we do not feel we need that study period because we as a Liberal government have been applying corrective measures now and will continue to do so.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: I have spoken about the economic cost of the type of control advocated by the Tories which is beginning to be known as Tory wage controls.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: However, there is a social cost. I have been disturbed, Mr. Speaker, by the tendency of some advocates of general controls to try to convey the impression that controls could be imposed at negligible social cost to the people of Canada. This is disturbing to me because it smacks of political opportunism.

It is less than honest to dwell expansively on the pleasant prospect of fixed consumer prices, while at the same time diverting attention from the not so pleasant prospect of fixed incomes. It is less than honest not to tell the public that wage controls have their own set of injustices, that they apply most inflexibly to blue-collar workers whose pay can be easily monitored, and most flexibly to white-collar workers who can be given a salary increase under the guise of an artificial job reclassification. As to the possibility of sophisticated abuse by landlords, professional and self-employed people, it is self-evident.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: This is not said as an attempt to argue against the theory of controls. I am looking at the political aspects of it now. I think those who talk about controls as a simple measure should take the trouble to recognize the dignity and the right of their audience to know the difficulties I have just pointed out. For those reasons, income controls risk hurting the small and the poor more than they do the big and the rich; and while that might be of minor concern to the more conservative governments and political parties, it is of great and fundamental concern to this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: We do not believe that the workingman should be expected to bear an unfair share of the cost of solving the problems of inflation, and that is why we will ask him to treat with great skepticism any argument for general controls which does not set out all the facts, the pleasant as well as the unpleasant, those with political appeal and those without.

Aside from the 90-day freeze, what else does the Leader of the Opposition offer as an alternative to the proposals the government has put forward? He offers an energy policy which omits all the essential and potentially controversial details. He offers his concern about the impact of inflation upon Canadian individuals, families, communities and institutions, a concern which I know is sincere, a concern which is common to us all. What he does not offer is a package of workable solutions to inflation and the many other problems we face as a country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: I heard the Leader of the Opposition say this afternoon, to the great applause of his supporters, "We have the will to do it." Of course, Mr. Speaker, they have