

product without the assurance that the producer will still be able to make a reasonable profit? If production costs keep increasing, there will be no way of adopting the measure announced by the minister.

Therefore, since there is a control on sales prices it is urgent, mainly for the producer—and this will involve all kinds of production—that the government take immediate action to enable the producer to make reasonable profits.

I know that the Progressive Conservative party is often bringing us back to a policy of a price freeze of 90 days. I would have reason to believe, Mr. Speaker, that this 90-day period, ordered in the United States, did not have any extraordinary or very profitable effects.

On the other hand, it is clear that people are waiting for a positive reaction on the part of the government. It is obvious that Parliament will have to find a solution, consideration being taken of the concern and difficulties this is causing. To what extent will the government be able to consider ordering a price freeze without necessarily having to set limits because the U.S. experience has made us understand that some producers were storing goods or delaying the shipment of their herds to slaughter houses and that after 90 days they could make even bigger profits?

I therefore wonder if the government might not consider imposing simply a price freeze without necessarily setting time limits, but deciding that it will end the freeze whenever it may judge it necessary and appropriate.

Now, can we consider a price freeze, especially a long one, without necessarily freezing wages? I should say right now that I will oppose any general wage freeze. In view of the cost of living, can we consider today freezing the minimum wages for instance as easily as we would freeze the wages of the professional classes? Therefore I believe that we should establish some standards to impose a fixed hourly rate. Would it be fair for example to freeze some hourly wages at \$7 and at the same time freeze the minimum wages at \$1.75 or \$1.90 an hour? We must therefore establish standards and decide that a general wage freeze is impossible; personally, I would object to it. But we are perfectly aware that, in the long term, you cannot have one without the other. I believe the government should apply itself more to the analysis and consideration of this possibility.

But one thing is certain, Mr. Speaker, as long as the government refuses to stop price increases, we will see prices rise every day. Recently, the government announced some steps to refrain these increases, but it is clear they are political measures set up from day to day. Far from me to blame the government for announcing these measures last week. Of course, they were necessary, warranted, but there again, nothing assures us that we will not see more price rises and will the government be compelled day after day or week after week to introduce new measures to ward off these new increases?

Therefore, if the government thought that the legislation announced would be adequate for the next 12 months, or the next five or six years, I think it is making a big mistake. That legislation is acceptable considering the needs, but it is inadequate as a guarantee.

Cost of Living

That is why I believe the debate we are having tonight should enlighten us and prompt the government to take a very concrete measure. Would it be so embarrassing to accept a valuable proposal from the opposition? The system under which we live disappoints me to a certain extent. It is by tradition, of course, Mr. Speaker, and that is how the people are often disappointed. By tradition, the government should not accept, at least not readily, a proposal from the opposition and by tradition, the opposition must always blame the government, even if the government is right. Therefore, with such a practice or such traditions, we finally lose the confidence of the people and make the people pay for a system that will not change, that members of this House refuse to change.

Therefore, it is imperative that this government receive, accept and consider a proposal that would be fair and that would be a solution to the problems we face at the present time, and it is as important for opposition members to support the government and to force it to act quickly when it is right and when it solves a problem or a difficulty. Therefore, one must of course show some objectivity and lay aside a partisanship which definitely harms the people and for which people must pay. Personally, Mr. Speaker, I don't give a hoot whether a Liberal or a Progressive Conservative government is at the head of this country; what is important is that the people obtain solutions to their problems, and it is up to Parliament, up to each member to see to it.

I am repeating opinions that I have already expressed in this House and that is the way I think I should continue to perform in the sense that I seek above all the better being of each individual in this country. And in order to do that, I must not ask myself if I should favour one party rather than another; I must look for the better legislation and support it; that is the role of every member of Parliament.

And to the extent that we try and pass the legislation most likely to serve the interests of a society, we will succeed in improving the plight of our constituents and allowing them to feel much happier and in greater security.

I would also like as a last point to raise the extremely serious problems relating to housing.

There is talk about suppressing the sales tax of 11 per cent on building materials as a solution to the problem.

Personally, I thought the abolition of that tax could encourage young couples or individuals to become home owners because we know that an individual acquiring ownership becomes more interested, more motivated in his interest in his municipality, his province, and industry.

And I do not think I am wrong in saying that the housing industry affects 33 per cent of the labour force. So, I think that this government has all the reasons in the world to take particular interest in the promotion of the residential housing industry.

We are aware also that the interest rates of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation are now unreasonably high. And I wonder if it is not appropriate to ask the government to consider the possibility of giving a 5 per cent subsidy, for instance, to roll back the interest rates of the CMHC to an acceptable level.