

Cost of Living

cent in Canada. Food prices in the U.S. rose at an annual rate of 18.2 per cent, significantly more than the 14.5 per cent in Canada, despite the rigorous control freeze program covering food during that period.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): If many members of the House still have any lingering doubts about the ineffectiveness of a controlling program in containing inflation, I would draw their attention to the report from Washington late last week that in August, at a time when the freeze was partially lifted in support of phase 4 of the program, U.S. wholesale prices increased, seasonally adjusted, by 6.2 per cent over the previous month of July. That represents an annual increase in wholesale prices in the U.S. under a control program of more than 75 per cent taken over the year. Yet, the Leader of the Opposition even today still tries to convince Canadians that we can contain inflation in this country simply by following the U.S. example and by adopting our own freeze control program.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I should like to point out further that during the period from last November to July when the United Kingdom instituted a freeze, followed in May by a control program, consumer prices rose 6 per cent in Great Britain, the same increase as was experienced during the same period of time in Canada.

Again I want to go on record regarding the response which the government has made to this worldwide contagious problem of inflation. Although we have undertaken—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to interrupt the minister but his time has expired. He can continue only with the unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I find this rather embarrassing. There were consultations among the parties. The NDP approached us about extending time for the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Lewis) and the Cr ditistes. We felt very strongly that, since only a limited amount of time was available, I should stay within my time and we should stick strictly to the rule. I hope that since the Minister of Finance is only reading something he said many times before, he would get someone else to read it for him later.

Mr. Speaker: As there is not unanimous consent—

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Speaker: —the Chair will recognize the hon. member for York South.

Mr. Bell: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I not only ask that you follow the rules, but I also ask you to recognize that there is only one opposition party left in the House as of Friday afternoon.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. This is the first time that I can

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

recall that in a major debate on the economy introduced by the opposition the Minister of Finance was not given some opportunity to finish what he had to say.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

● (1600)

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for York South.

Mr. Hellyer: The hon. member for York South, on behalf of the government, will finish the minister's speech.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May we have order, please? I just want to suggest to hon. members that we are, in fact, operating on limited time and I would hope that hon. members would agree at least to give all hon. members who are recognized their full 20 minutes. The hon. member for York South.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, our position on the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) is governed by three factors. The first is—

An hon. Member: Fear.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: —our rejection of the proposals, the irresponsible and unworkable proposals made by the Conservative party. I noted that, for the first time, the Leader of the Opposition had the modesty to assure the House and the people of Canada that the Conservative party was not suggesting that their measures could halt inflation. For the first time, he had the decency to say that to parliament and to the people of Canada. I think that should be underlined. He said that the proposals he made, which consist of a temporary short freeze of 60 days or 90 days, or even 30 days—he mentioned that—and a short temporary longer period of restraint, would fight the inflation psychology? For the life of me I cannot understand the logic of that.

It seems to me that to say to the House or to the various sectors of the Canadian economy there will be a freeze for only 60 or 90 days is to feed inflation psychology and make the situation worse when that period is over. It seems to me when you say to the people of Canada or any sector of the economy that you want to restrain—that was the word used by the Leader of the Opposition and not control—for a few months you feed the inflation psychology and permit everyone to "rev" up and, when the eighteen months are over, go to town on everybody concerned. There is no sense or logic in this, and I find a lack of honesty in the proposal.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: The second factor that governs our position on this motion is that the government has presented to parliament, in response to our demands, a number of measures which are of benefit to Canadians and to