

### *Cost of Living*

replies received to the questionnaire, when asked, "Would you accept the imposition of some form of wage and price controls to combat inflation?" they answered as follows: yes, 3,934; no, 496; undecided, 319.

When asked, "Do you favour wage controls?" the replies were: yes, 2,830; no, 1,195; undecided, 473. When asked, "Do you favour a freeze on rent and food prices?" the replies were: yes, 3,697; no, 565; undecided, 240. When asked, "Should pensions be increased to counteract inflation?" the replies were: yes, 4,095; no, 350; undecided, 238.

There were other views sought and given along social lines of crime and capital punishment with which I agree, but I will not raise them here because they are not relevant to this debate. But what better evidence and consensus does the Prime Minister want regarding controls? If he is embarrassed lest he might be accused of theft and plagiarism of Progressive Conservative policies, he need have no qualms since these are the opinions of an honest and impartial cross-section of Canadian public opinion.

We refer to inflation as being the ruination of the economy of many countries. We are currently informed that rampant inflation helped spark the recent sad happenings in the Republic of Chile, and that is true. Today's headlines presage the relentless advance of prices and of all other costs and factors that compose our economy. The *Montreal Star* has a headline, "Increase in prices highest since 1951;" the *Ottawa Journal*, "Living costs zoom—worst in 22 years;" the *Ottawa Citizen*, "Living costs leap—steepest in 22 years;" and *Le Droit*, "Bond prodigieux des aliments". That is why my leader was the prime mover in this debate today. That is why our party said we would stay here and fight the problems besetting the Canadian people, instead of adjourning which I understand was advocated by those on the government benches and by their partners the NDP.

I have one more point of argument to make and it concerns housing. I think I am fairly well qualified to make this point regarding housing and its high cost. I am a lumberman by trade and was in that business for 25 years before being elected to this House. Members of my family are still carrying on in that business.

The exorbitant cost of building has reached the point where people who need housing are unable to finance construction. This afternoon, in trying to answer one of the questions put to him, the Prime Minister said that the greatest factor in the inflationary crisis was supply, and of course he meant the cost and relative plentitude of supply. Using his own argument, I therefore call upon him to abolish the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials which is creating a major cost in the price of lumber and building materials supply.

● (2320)

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out I protested this on that same day, May 27, 1966 in this House and have done so since, as have many other members on all sides of the House. I say to the Prime Minister that if he will take off the 11 per cent tax on lumber and building supplies at the manufacturers' level, he will be reducing the price of this material by almost 20 per cent of the retail level. Will the Prime Minister not now respond?

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

Mr. Speaker, as a result of inflation and the high cost of living, the Canadian people are fast losing whatever confidence they may have had in Liberalism and in this Trudeau government so precariously elected last October. I would think that if this government expected to survive much longer, they would heed the opinions of the people and those of a responsible official opposition and do something, even as a parting gesture, to help the economy and the well-being of the people of Canada.

**Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the debate with great interest this afternoon when government spokesmen, particularly the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) attempted to explain the inexplicable actions of this government and to defend the indefensible.

The chickens have come home to roost, Mr. Speaker. We are now witnessing the effects of five years of Trudeau administration, five years of economic bungling and certainly five years of the implementation of ill-conceived agricultural policies which have struck at the heart and soul of our agricultural industry. The implementation of these policies over the past five years has left thousands of farmers in economic ruin. During the last five years the government has stated, even as it does now, that the problems in agriculture are largely of an international nature and they cannot do anything to relieve these conditions. Today we got the same explanation from the Minister of Finance.

The problems of inflation and the economic chaos that exists in this country have been perpetuated by this government and it will not be easy to relieve them. Every day more and more Canadians of every political stripe are becoming convinced that this government cannot and will not reverse the inflationary cycle. Nor will my friends to the left, the New Democratic Party, help the situation by their marriage of convenience. The Liberals are totally preoccupied with their lust for power, and the New Democratic Party is solely preoccupied with its lust for life.

This government must change its attitude or it must be turfed out, Mr. Speaker. These are the options open to this parliament and to the people of Canada. Notwithstanding anything that the New Democratic Party might say, it is as responsible for the chaotic economic conditions that we are now living under as is the Liberal government. Many of their thoughts, ideals and philosophies have been thrust upon this weak-kneed government which has gone along with them simply to cling to power.

**An hon. Member:** There is not a minister in the House who cares, either.

**An hon. Member:** There is not one here at all.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** The result of this alliance, Mr. Speaker, is a government which is on a spending spree unprecedented in our country. This afternoon the Minister of Finance pointed out that the reason for the rising cost of living is a shortage of basic commodities coupled with overwhelming demand. He pointed out, as well, that the main thrust of this government is to increase the supply of those basic commodities.