

*Cost of Living*

couples who wanted a home, all the old people who wanted to maintain the home they had, have had to pay the price of this narrow, obsolete economic doctrine of the 1930's.

I have heard the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), and I have heard many members of our party in this House and across the country, say that we accept housing as a necessity that ought not to be used by a group of financial advisers as a way of juggling control. I make this suggestion to the Minister of Finance with deep sincerity, and I think every member of his party supports it, that he take a look at this advice proffered not only by our party but other parties as well. It is not partisan advice. The suggestion is made on behalf of the 800,000 people to whom the hon. member for Calgary North referred. Every year, 4 per cent or 5 per cent more people want to have a new home instead of crowding into the ant heaps in the cities. Give Canadians a chance to have a little bit of soil and a house of their own which is the Canadian way.

The third point is that along with this new phenomenon of cost-push, pushing up prices, we had a group of government advisers applying to it an obsolete method of controlling inflation. Cost-push is not controlled by money, by adding more taxes because that is what cost-push is. That is what this government did in 1969. Then they were so horrified by the results that they turned around and poured money into circulation like mad. Today, we have the phenomenon of expensive money, unemployment and high prices, in a package. I do not blame the Minister of Finance; he is just a chip on a river hoping some day to touch shore. All I am asking of the Minister of Finance and his colleagues is to challenge this control of ministers of finance by their advisers. They have a record for 25 years of being consistently wrong. In our day we may not have been very good, but at least we challenged them.

During the past ten years I have put a number of speeches on the record. Time does not allow me to read them, but I will give the minister the dates if he wants to read some of them. They were made on April 1, 1966; September 8, 1966, and October 10, 1967. In the time allotted to me on those occasions, I seriously tried to put forward some short-term and long-term proposals, principles of selectivity, timing, selectivity by region, selectivity by industry, selectivity by purpose. All those things can be covered in what has been said on this subject in the last two or three months in this House. I have not met any group of economists in any university in this or any other country who have been able to challenge the logic and coherence of those proposals, but there is no evidence yet that they have even been looked at by the advisers to the minister. This is what I want to say, this is the type of thing I would like them to look at and these are the types of policies to which our party is pledged.

In the last few months, we have had the old-fashioned phenomenon of old-fashioned shortages arising. We will soon have shortages of fuel, food and steel and, of course, a shortage of fibre is on the horizon. As one hon. member from the Social Credit party asked tonight, why should Canada, why should the United States, why should Australia, why should Western Europe all be short of these things? My God, the productive potential of the United States and Canada for food has been barely scratched. Why is there a shortage in this country? The shortage

[Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain).]

results from the decisions of the advisers to the government who made the decision in the fall of 1969, and implemented it in the spring of 1970 to deliberately have a shortage of production as a way of getting prices high—the Lift program, the national products marketing bill, the Stabilization Act, the small farms program, the objective of which was to get two of every three farmers off the land and keep prices down long enough to force them off the land. I do not have to go into all that. The governments of the United States and Canada are equally guilty, along with the governments of Australia and Western Europe, of making food short in their own areas. This winter, ten million out of 30 million people who are now suffering from famine are expected to die. We have forgotten the problems of others in looking at our own navels.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, our problem is not insoluble. What is of more concern to me is that we have never been closer than we were in 1924-29 to a breakdown in world monetary affairs. The government knows this, the NDP know it and we certainly know it. The meeting in Nairobi, referred to by the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies), will deal with this problem. In essence, it is that trade between nations is increasing at such a rate that we do not have the monetary media to handle it. Just as in 1924-29 gold and English sterling would not do it, so in 1973 neither American dollars nor the SDR's are sufficient, yet we cannot get out of this government any indication from their philosophy or policy that this is the problem.

● (2210)

If the world machinery of trade breaks down, what country will suffer the worst? We will. This has a tie-up with our domestic policy. That is why the hon. member for Don Valley asked simple, elementary questions. We Conservatives know what we would like to do. Where is the policy, if you have a philosophy that deals with things like the value of our dollar in relation to the American dollar, Swiss francs, German Deutschmarks and the Japanese yen. These are all tied up with this domestic situation. We know what we want to do. We have held meeting after meeting to discuss what we want to do, but we have to get stability before we can do these things.

It is not any accident that the Conservative party, surely the last party that would ever go for controls, should come out and say we see no recourse but for a 90 day freeze, then one and a half or two years for controls to ensure stability so we can move forward with our long and short range policies. Whenever the Conservative party accepts that position, great is the danger to the nation because in the long run, controls are inflationary. You have to get out of them as fast as you can. However, you cannot put in these policies and make these changes unless there is that economic stability. That is what I am asking this House to consider.

We moved this motion because, under the rules, we do not have any opportunity to use in the old fashioned method of considering the estimates to put a minister on a griddle for days until we get some answers. Under the new rules, we cannot question him in committee and we cannot question him in the House and get answers. We are asking the government to accept the fact that there is sincerity in all parties with regard to this problem of inflation that is affecting all our people, to take a look at it in a non-parti-