

*Cost of Living*

retain it in office. Apparently they have changed their view; they have repented. Possibly a deathbed repentance is better than no repentance at all.

So, Mr. Speaker, one wonders, as one remembers the steps taken by the Prices Review Board in sending out these gentlemen, or ladies, as the case may be, across the country to investigate, if that action is to be any more effective than other actions the government has proposed up to the present time. I doubt very much that these results will be very much better. So as we look at the situation I say that the Canadian people, surely, have a right to expect more from this government and from the \$40,000 a year girl and others who have been engaged to help her in this particular matter.

May I suggest that if there ever was a time when a motion of non-confidence was appropriate, it is the present time. I wish to read the motion into the record. The leader of my party moved:

That this House has no confidence in the adequacy of government measures to deal with the cost of living as such measures were announced to the House by the Prime Minister on September 4th, 1973.

I suggest that the motion is worthy of support by all members of the House, including Liberals. Surely all those in the opposition parties will support the motion, because I believe the people of Canada expect action now.

**Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the remarks of the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) this afternoon and I think he showed a peculiar, a curious conceit in suggesting that those who disagree with the motion are those who support a policy of no action at all. I want to make it clear that my quarrel with the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) is a substantive quarrel based on a very serious disagreement about the substance of the proposals put forward.

● (2120)

I am frightened when I hear people who know so little cheer so loudly for a policy. When I hear them speak in the House, my fears of their ignorance are verified. I am not impressed by a party whose members in the House of Commons are of and speak for the business and professional and better-off groups in the community—who are themselves, as I suspect most of us are, in the top 1 or 2 per cent of the income groups of this country—calling for incomes policies and wage controls. Well they might, Mr. Speaker; they have made it. My concern and the concern of my party is for many other millions of Canadians who have been treating each other fairly in the marketplace and neither deserve nor need to be controlled.

My leader and the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggarr (Mr. Gleave) have presented some aspects of the policy which our party believes is the answer to many of the problems of rising prices. We talked about fair incentives to the farmer greatly to increase the supply and production of food. As the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggarr said, surely that is the basic and best approach.

On many occasions we have advocated that the Food Prices Review Board be given teeth. It should not only be given the power of investigation, which it has, but power

[Mr. Patterson]

to impose cancellations or roll-back of price increases which are unjustified by the facts. I was interested to hear the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Patterson) say the same thing. Perhaps he does not know that in another place last Thursday his party voted against such a motion moved by myself.

We called for subsidy programs to assist those on low and fixed incomes. We are modestly gratified to see the government has brought forward some programs along that line. We have called for controls on supplies and production of energy resources in this country. Although it is not entirely clear, it appears the government is moving in that direction. Our policy might well be summed up as favouring selective controls where they count, not indiscriminately across the board. There should be a prices review board with real teeth, assistance for those on low and fixed incomes and a program of supply management for food and other scarce commodities.

Reference has been made today to the types of inflation from which this country has been suffering. I commend to all members of the House, particularly those of the Conservative party, an article in the *Globe and Mail* by a distinguished Canadian economist, Vincent Blader. I do not, in the limited time at my disposal, intend to quote from the article. But he does point out that the kind of inflation to which wage and price controls would apply is not the kind we are predominantly suffering from at this time. I suggest the hon. member for Don Valley could do well to read that article.

It is apparently considered unfair and unrealistic to suggest the inflation we suffer from in Canada is related to worldwide problems. I wonder if members of the Conservative party are aware of the world commodity index published in *The Economist* two months ago which points out, among other things, that the index of food prices worldwide rose more in one year, between June 1972 and 1973, than in all the years from 1972 back to June 1949. That is perhaps cold comfort when we are talking about Canadian policies, but I suggest it is somehow not unrelated to the problems we are discussing today.

The hon. member for Don Valley seemed disappointed that members of this party insisted on dragging into the debate experience in other parts of the world. I suggest that experience is very real. The hon. member suggested the experience in the United States with price and wage controls was not sufficient evidence that we ought not to proceed with them. Well, we have to take our experiences from where we can find them.

There are two countries in particular currently pursuing policies of price controls. One is the United States, to which reference has repeatedly been made. That has not been an experience which would fill this House of Commons with assurance that it should be followed in this country. Second, there is the experience in Great Britain. I think it is instructive. The members of the Conservative Party urged the Prices Review Board to study prices and wage controls in other countries. They did so in Britain. I quote from a document produced last week as a result of that study:

Many statistical studies have been made which have sought to estimate the divergence between actual wage and price movements and those which would have occurred in the absence of the