

expects them to behave in this way and not take advantage of the current situation to push up prices and costs.

These measures, Mr. Speaker, express the government's determination to deal with the problem of inflation in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, at one point the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) suggested that we in the opposition were afraid of the contents of the paper he has just presented to the House. When one considers that the Prime Minister was not able to produce this document at two o'clock, the fact that at two o'clock we got the impression that we would receive it in plenty of time before four o'clock, and we received it between 25 and 20 minutes to four, it looks as though the Prime Minister was rather afraid of anybody seeing what was in it. I do not know how early in the afternoon the government decided on these measures, but certainly it had some difficulty getting them down on paper.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: That kind of delay is not the sort of tactic or well organized endeavour that is likely to engender very much confidence in respect of what is in this document. There was a good deal of high expectation, which turned out to have been misplaced, that the Prime Minister would finally present a significant policy statement to this parliament. Instead, the Prime Minister has given us this afternoon a sort of pot-pourri of measures that deal with the most evident and discomfoting symptoms of the sickness, or some of them—a review of the substantial measures previously announced—but no comprehensive assault on inflation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The Prime Minister then went back to talk about the great anti-inflationary benefits conferred by the budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) last February. The government has evidently found it completely impossible to monitor the effects, because we have not had that monitoring report as yet and it has been clear for very many months that the budget of the Minister of Finance was a joke as far as an attack on inflation in this country is concerned.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: In respect of the measures announced this afternoon with regard to the Food Prices Review Board—and I am sure this is disappointing for the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) and his colleagues—as I understand what the Prime Minister said, nothing effective at all has been done to put any teeth into the operations of that board.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The Prime Minister announced some measures that will receive general approval, such as the subsidy in respect of milk and the increase to \$12 in family and youth allowances, although a lot of us wonder what

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kind of improvising is going on when the government announces a longer term program involving income taxation regarding these payments or allowances when introducing an interim measure which involves no such taxation. However, I am not going to quibble about questions like that in discussing a matter of such general importance.

Let me just say, with regard to the increase in old age pensions announced, or boasted about by the Prime Minister—that is, the device or principle of escalating on a quarterly basis—that for a long time, and until very recently, the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) have been saying that this is an impossible thing. They rejected it as impossible and as something very foolish for me to have recommended a year ago.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I express the hope that every member of this House will take a very careful look at the bill the government has put before the House and the contrived and complex methods the government has adopted to deal with this very urgent problem facing our older people.

We approve of the wheat subsidy. But here is a government coming forward, in the first part of September, increasing to \$1.25 a payment which it reduced from \$1.04 to \$1 in July. In the meantime the government has sat idly by and watched the price of bread go up six cents a loaf. Now the Prime Minister says this measure will avoid a further increase of five cents which would otherwise be inevitable in October.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I think a government that again has been idle while watching the price of bread go up six cents a loaf, and now puts forward this lame kind of proposal, is not one that is very much concerned about the ordinary people of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I will have something to say about petroleum in a few minutes. But there is nothing in this statement for the homeowner. The government has not even suggested removing the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials, and has made no proposal to remove the sales tax on clothing for all Canadians, following up the step taken last winter in respect of clothing for children.

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There are those who for their own reasons characterized the proposals we put forward in February as either outdated or simply unworthy of a Canadian government.

An hon. Member: Both.

Mr. Stanfield: I certainly do not concern myself with such criticisms coming from the government side, because they said the same thing about the proposals we urged in connection with unemployment. They said the same thing about the program we put forward with regard to indexing income tax. They said the same thing with regard to our