

urst, 221 per cent; Domtar, 133 per cent; Great Lakes Paper Company, 375 per cent; George Weston Limited, 86 per cent; Canada Packers, 36 per cent; Dominion Dairies, 31 per cent; Dominion Stores, 30 per cent; M. Loeb, 73 per cent, and Toronto-Dominion Bank 25 per cent. The story is the same in sector after sector—for the corporations very substantial profit increases, for the Canadian people very substantial price increases. The conclusion is inevitable. Canadians must be prepared to see effective government intervention to ensure that the consumer is protected.

As well, Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of other circumstances, perhaps coincidental, although I do not think so, in recent months to deepen the suspicion of the Canadian people that there is something seriously wrong in the economy, and that it is to be found in the decision making capacity of the corporate sector.

For example, there was the Alberta Supreme Court ruling last September ordering Canada Safeway to restrict its operations and reduce its market domination in Calgary and Edmonton. There was the Prices Review Board report of last September referring to a worrying lack of competition in some sectors of the food industry. There was the fining of Browning Arms Company in Toronto last September for resale price maintenance, the fining of Dominion Stores for misleading advertising, the Food Prices Review Board's criticism of the pricing and selling practices of the bakery industry, the *Globe and Mail's* report of a fine of \$432,000 levied by the British Columbia Supreme Court against seven cement companies in that province, including the country's largest ones, for price fixing and other violations of the Combines Investigation Act. Four cement firms are now being prosecuted in Ontario for similar offences. Price fixing charges have been laid against 74 of the best known general insurance companies operating in Canada, relating to the sale of fire insurance in Nova Scotia. Canada's three largest sugar refiners, convicted of price fixing only a few years ago, are once again before the courts on similar charges.

Is it any wonder that the Canadian people feel sceptical about this parliament's determination to deal with the problem of pricing policy and profit policy? I ask that, because against this background what has been the government's response? The government set up a Food Prices Review Board upon the recommendation of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices. But its own spokesmen on that committee would not agree to recommend that the board be given the powers of rollback, and neither would the Conservatives on the same committee. We must ask ourselves whose side are they really on?

**An hon. Member:** George Weston's!

**Mr. Grier:** So, Mr. Speaker, the Food Prices Review Board has no powers of rollback. It has no powers to enforce its recommendations. But it can, and it has recommended. And when it does recommend, as it did two weeks ago in the matter of bread price increases, the government threshes about, with the minister evading, playing for time, ducking and doing nothing, and doing nothing very unclearly.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Price Control

**Mr. Grier:** Why doesn't the government act to give itself the power of rollback? Why doesn't it tell the bakers, "That is it." It is because it has not asked parliament to give it the power of rollback. And if it did, Mr. Speaker, if the government came before this House I venture to suggest it might get that power. And if it did not, then we would truly find out whose side the members of this House, in their separate parties, are really on.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Grier:** We have repeatedly asked the government, the minister and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau): when are you bringing in these powers? Are you considering bringing in these powers? As I said the other day, the evasiveness of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Gray) on this matter is a by-word in parliament. And the Prime Minister, who surely must be the chief spokesman for the government on this matter, ever since last May has also evaded the crunch. He suggested, as he did on May 8 last, that it would be the intention of the government "to take action on any reasonable proposition put forward" by the Food Prices Review Board, and "if legislation is needed in order to act as recommended," then of course the government would present it to the House. That was on May 8. We have had nothing since.

On August 13 he said to this House:

In the event that the Board reports that significant instances of profiteering have occurred which the parties concerned are unwilling to correct voluntarily, the government will seek parliamentary authority to undertake corrective action.

On September 4, he reinforced that quasi-commitment.

On November 2, in answer to the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), he said that if these people "refused to take the action that we thought was necessary for the welfare of Canadians, then we would intervene."

On February 27 the Speech from the Throne referred to the government's intention "to prevent any group or groups from taking undue advantage of the current situation at the expense of others," which is unmistakably a reference to the subject matter to which I am addressing myself this morning.

Then, on March 12, in answer to a question I posed to him, the Prime Minister again indicated his intention to come soon before parliament with a request for some kind of power. How soon, I asked him, and he again replied soon. Well, Mr. Speaker, today, Friday, is soon, surely soon enough for the Prime Minister to bring in the kind of legislation which he himself has admitted the government is considering.

It is not just a matter of the Prime Minister coming into the House some afternoon, faced with the defiance of a company refusing to roll back prices, and saying, "O.K. fellows, lets do something about it." Before the government can act it must request from parliament the power to so act. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the government has repeatedly refused to accept the logic of that position. It has refused to ask parliament to give it contingent power so that, when a case arises, it may intervene.

I remind the House that the government took precisely the kind of step I am referring to, in dealing with the energy crisis last December and in January of this year. It