

group has been established composed of Canadian and United States officials to draft a joint reply to the International Joint Commission's annual report. Finally, the two sides agreed that a further meeting should take place in approximately six months time as a part of the continuing assessment process.

Illegal food marketing practices

Officials of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will review immediately more than 100 cases of possible merchandising irregularities received recently from the Food Prices Review Board.

Mr. Herb Gray, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister, said that where the results of the reviews warranted it there would be prompt further investigations with a view to laying charges under the laws administered by his Department.

The reports, concerning marketing practices of a number of food stores, were prepared last month by the Board's special investigating team.

In turning over the reports to the Consumer and Corporate Affairs Department, the Board noted that they indicated instances where offences may have been committed, though there was insufficient evidence for successful prosecutions.

The reports are now being examined for indications of possible contraventions of the Weights and Measures Act, Food and Drugs Act, the Canada Agricultural Products Standards Act or the misleading advertising provisions of the Combines Investigation Act. If violations have occurred to provincial statutes governing the sale of agricultural products, which are enforced by agreement with the provinces, the federal Department will also investigate, Mr. Gray said.

He also said that he had instructed his officials to write to Board Chairman Mrs. Beryl Plumtre last month for any information arising from the Board's national investigation on suspected breaches of legislation.

Last winter, fatal snowmobile accidents increased to 119 from 102 during the previous year, while the number of victims increased to 127 from 116.

Pensions may increase with the cost of living

Federal and provincial ministers of welfare have reached agreement on increases in the Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Plan. The ministers, who met in Ottawa on October 11 and 12, issued a statement announcing the changes which, if Parliament approves, will give about half a million Canadians pension increases ranging from 8 to 20 per cent next January. Under the new arrangements, pension benefits are tied to the annual rise in the cost of living.

Proposed changes

National Health and Welfare Minister Marc Lalonde says he wants to introduce legislation as soon as possible to implement the plan, which is as follows:

On January 1 the maximum pensionable earnings level will rise from the present \$5,600 a year to \$6,600. This means that the maximum contributions made by employees will rise from \$90 a year to \$106.20. Employers' contributions will increase by the same amount. Canada Pension Plan cheques will rise at the end of January from anywhere between 8 and 20 per cent, depending on how long recipients have

been retired. A "catch-up" clause is included for those who have been subject to the limit of the 2 percent increase a year now in effect.

Ministers agreed to eliminate the 2 percent yearly increase and to use instead the annual rise in the cost of living as a base by which pensions will increase, to absorb, in Mr. Lalonde's words "the full impact of inflation".

The third change is to permit pensions to increase at a rate of 12½ per cent a year until the maximum yearly pensionable earnings reach the level that Statistics Canada says is the average rate and salaries earned by Canadians.

Another amendment is that pensions will be payable to anyone aged 65 regardless of whether he or she enters the labour force.

The final change concerns Quebec, which has agreed to keep its pension plan in line with the Canada Pension Plan. Workers moving into and out of the province will not suffer losses or pay higher contributions.

Mr. Lalonde estimated that in 15 years pensionable earnings will reach more than \$13,000 a year.

Saskatchewan educational communications agency

Legislation to create a Saskatchewan educational communications agency called Saskmedia, is expected to be introduced at the province's legislative sessions this autumn.

The proposed corporation, the chief recommendation of a report recently prepared by Dr. R.L. Faris of Regina, would develop the use of print, film and electronic media in education under guidelines set by a provincial educational communications authority (also to be created).

Along with recommending the establishment of these two bodies (Saskmedia to supply materials, and a communications authority to develop policy and production guidelines), the report included the following proposals:

Co-ordinate the use of the media for schools and adult education.

Establish Radio Saskatchewan, a

19-station FM radio network with local access through community colleges. (The main emphasis of the FM radio network would be on adult education and community development through informal open-line programs, radio forums and the production of cultural, historical and Indian-language material).

Expand the provincial library to become Saskmedia's distribution division.

Develop a province-wide telex system to speed library service in rural areas.

Develop Saskatchewan-based materials in all media, with attention to ethnic, historical and Indian-language production.

Use existing university television production facilities.

Emphasize informal educational use of media on both radio and cable television.