

with direct consumer protection. I have already confirmed that the government will be presenting its new competition policy to the House in stages, as recommended by the committee. I look forward to the bill covering the first stage being presented as soon as possible after certain final drafting revisions now under way are completed.

The committee has also asked that the government consider the advisability of proclaiming immediately the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act. The committee was of the view that this might have a beneficial effect on food costs. I agree with what I believe to be the intent of this recommendation, that is, to bring these regulations into force as soon as possible. This is also my own objective. I now anticipate that the proposed regulations will be published in the *Canada Gazette* on September 22.

**Mr. Baldwin:** What year?

**Mr. Gray:** This year, of course. I see you are probably thinking of the past. I think, however, that the committee might agree, on reflection, that the act itself could not be proclaimed immediately at that point. These regulations will have to apply to an estimated 80,000 domestic and 40,000 imported pre-packaged products from food to hardware items. The law provides that there must be an opportunity given for public comment on the proposed regulations before they are finally promulgated into law. It would be my intention, therefore, to proclaim the act certainly by the end of the year.

The committee has made other recommendations in its reports about measures to assist the consumer in the marketplace. Since the first report the government has made a sizeable grant to the one national consumer organization to assist it in appearing before regulatory bodies and thereby to carry out a more active consumer advocacy role as recommended by the special committee, and I look forward to further efforts of the type being developed. Studies are being developed on the cost to the consumer and the food industry of putting nutritional information on labels, and also on the best techniques and methods of displaying this information so that it is readily understood by the shopper in the food store. This is being done as part of the work of developing legislation in this area.

The third element in the government's plans of action on food prices are measures to mitigate the effect of rising prices on Canadians generally, and particularly those in our society who are likely to suffer most. The House has been dealing with a series of government proposals to help the Canadian consumer in this area, including immediate increases in the family allowance to \$12 monthly and the steps to further increase the old age and guaranteed income supplement by making quarterly adjustments where required by increases in the cost of living.

The special committee has recommended that programs be devised to provide food for low-income Canadians and with the passage of these measures those Canadians who have been hardest hit by the increase in food prices will have some needed compensation for the increase in their food budget. Also, as I said in the House on April 10, 1973, the Department of National Health and Welfare, through the Canada Assistance Plan, shares with the provinces 50 per cent of the cost of a number of assistance programs with special relevance to low-income consumers. My col-

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league, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), has consistently been encouraging the provinces to ensure that the rates under these programs adequately reflect the prices recipients have to pay for food and other essentials. In the last few months several provinces have raised the rates in their benefit structure to reflect rising prices and, of course, the federal share of the cost has risen accordingly.

I understand, further, that the Minister of National Health and Welfare and his department are actively examining what further programs might be called for in cooperation with the provinces and, recognizing the shared responsibility the provinces have in this area, to meet the needs of low-income consumers who may be facing additional nutritional problems because of the upsurge in food prices.

I think that what I have said, Mr. Speaker, confirms the efforts of the government in the areas dealt with by the recommendations of both reports of the special committee. In April, in commenting on the first report, I indicated that the government would strive to make a positive response to the thrust of each and every recommendation. This is also the position of the government with regard to the second report, and therefore it supports the motion to concur in the second report.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, may I say that I am pleased to have been able to participate actively in the decisions reached by the government to help the Canadian consumer, announced in recent months; measures which include reduction in personal income taxes, sales tax and custom duties, export controls on cattle and hogs, measures to increase family allowances and old age pensions, and to limit price increases in bread and milk. I am continuing these efforts to have the Canadian consumer helped through practical measures that take into account the world wide supply and demand conditions causing the upward pressures on Canadian prices.

This is my concluding sentence, Mr. Speaker. It continues to be the government's position, as the Prime Minister said on August 13, that "if any further action is called for to protect the food supplies of Canadians, or to protect Canadians against further erosion of their purchasing power, it will be taken without delay", and the government has shown its ability and its commitment to take decisive action to deal with these problems in the interest of the Canadian consumer and in fact all Canadians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

### **AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. Ron Atkey (St. Paul's):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear at the outset that on behalf of our party I propose to move an amendment to this motion of concurrence, and in order that Your Honour may have full opportunity to consider whether there are any procedural