

Mr. Fairweather: Nothing has been said yet.

Mr. Hees: That is why we want to fill in for you.

Mr. MacEachen: You are awfully nervous over there.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: May we have order, please.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Nielsen: Now say something.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the opposition is not afraid of the contents of this statement, otherwise they would not make so much noise; they would be much more relaxed in preparation for listening to their own leader make his statement. Export controls will last only as long as they are necessary to protect the food supply of Canadians and are not intended to be a permanent instrument for supply control.

On a more long-term basis, the provinces have been invited to a ministerial-level conference in September to agree on principles and policies to encourage increased food production at reasonable returns to farmers. Increased food production in Canada, encouraged by measures to bring more stability and security of prices to producers, strikes at the heart of high food prices now being faced by consumers. Therefore, the government is prepared to put in place measures such as higher support payments for agricultural commodities, advance payments on a wide range of agricultural products, commodity-oriented government-producer financed income stabilization programs and such other measures as might evolve after the September conference. There is no shortage of food in Canada now, Mr. Speaker, and the government will see to it that there is no artificial creation of scarcities.

Adequate farm manpower at times of peak need is critical to food supply, and if we are to increase production we must increase the availability of manpower. The Manpower and Immigration Department is preparing new and more effective arrangements for the recruitment, training, deployment and housing of seasonal farm workers. Additionally, wherever labour market bottlenecks may be contributing to rising costs, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) will conduct major efforts to ensure there is sufficient supply of skilled workers to meet demand.

● (1620)

[Translation]

And now, Mr. Speaker, I am coming to the second series of measures dealing with the consumer's protection.

Following my statement of August 14, the terms of reference of the Food Prices Review Board have been extended so that from now on, it can investigate price increases in such or such commodity. Its staff has been strengthened: some experienced civil servants attached to its investigation section, are already busy detecting unwarrantable price increases. In addition, the research division and the administration services have been enlarged. The government, I can assure this House, is anxious for the Board to be in a position to detect unjusti-

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tifiable increases as well as those responsible for them and to lay them to an unrelenting publicity. If the Board points out glaring abuses which those responsible do not eliminate, the government will resort to its powers to take the necessary steps. If it needs other powers, it will not hesitate to call on Parliament.

On the other hand, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Gray) will introduce in the House a bill amending and widening the Combines Investigation Act in order, among other things, to define and provide penalties in the greater number of cases of misleading advertising and other unfair commercial practices.

[English]

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I shall discuss measures to mitigate the effect of rising prices. Accompanying these measures to conserve and increase the supply of food, and to protect consumers in respect of food prices, the government will be asking parliament to approve a number of measures to protect the purchasing power of pensions and allowances.

First, legislation has been introduced to escalate the pensions under the OAS and GIS plans every three months instead of every year. This will make these pensions much more responsive to price increases. The legislation will take effect in October, 1973, when the basic pensions will increase from \$100 to \$105.30, reflecting the increases in the consumer price index for the ten-month period from October, 1972, to July, 1973; and the total pension, including the GIS supplement, will go from \$170.14 to \$179.16 for a single person.

Second, legislation will be introduced to remove the 2 per cent ceiling on the annual escalation of pensions paid under the Canada Pension Plan. The provinces will be asked for their support of this change, as required by law. Paralleling this change in the CPP, legislation has been introduced today to remove the 2 per cent ceiling on cost of living increases of pensions paid to retired employees of the Government of Canada.

As for private pensions, the government proposes to remove the provision that only employee pension plans with a 2 per cent maximum on the annual escalation of pensions being paid may be registered under the Income Tax Act. From now on, pension plans which provide for full escalation of pensions in response to cost of living increases will be registerable.

Third, the government has already introduced a measure which will assist families with children to meet higher living costs: the virtual tripling of family allowances in January, 1974, to an average of \$20 per month. To meet the higher prices which must be paid now, however, parliament will be asked to approve an interim increase in family and youth allowances to \$12 per month starting in October next. The \$12 allowances would not be taxable.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: As for the poorest families in Canadian society, the federal government shares 50 per cent of the cost of social assistance paid by the provinces to families in need. The government said in August, and repeats today, that it stands ready to pay 50 per cent of the costs of increasing these payments to compensate for higher