

First Report - continued .....

but also to make recommendations. Today, have a number of recommendations to make: some to the food chains, some to consumers and some to governments.

The Board is pleased to report that agreement was reached with a number of major food retailers on matters of importance to consumers.

It was agreed that:

- (1) Where there are two or more prices marked on an individual item, the consumer will pay the lowest price. Consumers are asked to report to the store manager and the Food Prices Review Board any violation of this undertaking
- (2) Financial information will be supplied to the Food Prices Review Board on a confidential basis as requested.
- (3) Firms will provide consumer information in their advertising to help buyers get the best value for their food dollars.
- (4) Efforts will be made to check the proliferation of package sizes. In cooperation with manufacturers, this could result in reductions in cost.

The senior food retailing executives present at the meeting gave their assurance of full cooperation with the Board in the exercise of its mandate.

Turning to consumers, we would like, in the first place to commend the constructive lead that has been taken by the Consumers' Association of Canada regarding the investigation of food prices. Some of us will be meeting with their Executive next week. At that time, we shall be discussing specific recommendations and a further announcement will follow.

Meanwhile, to individual consumers our preliminary recommendations are:

- (1) Buy only what you need; don't try to hoard. There are worldwide shortages of some foods, but the factors that have been pushing up

prices in Canada in recent months do not indicate basic short supply in this country. Of course, a shortage of anything can be artificially produced if everyone tries to stock up on it all at once.

(2) Shop carefully and compare prices. If you possibly can, avoid buying "convenience foods" which will usually cost you more than the basic ingredients, if you buy these separately.

(3) Report to the Board full details of increases in food prices which you consider unjustified. These reports will receive close scrutiny and action will be taken where appropriate.

To governments:

To begin with we wish to emphasize that under the conditions of today, there are Canadians who cannot afford the nutrition necessary for health; the blow falls hardest on the physical and mental development of our children.

Accordingly, we recommend as a matter of urgency that the Government give consideration to increasing the subsidy on the wheat used for domestic human consumption so as to moderate the anticipated increase in the price of bread and pasta products. In view of the fact that the international price of wheat used for bread and also that used for pasta products have risen drastically, the present subsidy of \$1.00 per bushel is inadequate to moderate significantly the prices of the products for which these wheats are used.

The governments concerned should immediately face up to the threat to consumer prices posed by price increases, actual or anticipated, paid under the authority of federal or provincial legislation, to primary producers of staple foods e.g. canned baked beans, dairy products, eggs, etc. The decisions of the agencies concerned should be carefully examined by governments, having in view, not only the need to pay remunerative prices to producers to maintain and increase production, but also the need, under present circumstances, to

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