



CANADA

## Radio Speech

by

**DONALD GORDON**

Chairman, WARTIME PRICES and TRADE BOARD

December 17, 1941



### *To the Women of Canada---*

Before Donald Gordon, Chairman of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board speaks tonight to the women of Canada, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation brings to you the voice of Her Majesty the Queen, as you heard her when she spoke to the women of the Empire on Armistice Day, 1939.

*"I know that it is not so difficult to do big things. Novelty, the excitement of new and interesting duties, have an exhilaration of their own. But these tasks are not for every woman."*

*"It is the thousand and one worries and irritations in carrying on wartime life in ordinary homes which are often so hard to bear."*

*"I would say to those who are feeling the strain—be assured that in carrying on your home duties and meeting all the worries cheerfully, you are giving real service to the country."*

*"You are taking your part in keeping the home front, which will have dangers of its own, stable and strong."*

*"It is for all our homes and for their security that we are fighting, and we must see to it that, despite all the difficulty of these days, our homes do not lose those very qualities which make them the background as well as the joy of our lives."*

*"We have all a part to play, and I know you will not fail in yours, remembering always that the greater your courage and devotion, the sooner shall we see again in our midst the happy ordered life for which we long."*



**"We have all a part to play and I  
know you will not fail in yours."**

I have ventured to use these inspiring words of Her Majesty the Queen because no words could better express the duty now resting upon every woman in Canada. Tonight Canada asks her three million women for a great contribution to the war effort.

We have not yet suffered the horror of invasion, the terror of enemy bombing. Let us hope we never will! Because we have not had to suffer these things, many of us in Canada have not had an opportunity to take part in actual war work. Many women have found special war duties, but *everywhere* women are saying: "Give us something more practical and more important to do!"

Well, *right now*, there is one national undertaking on the home front in which every woman can take part. Each of you can help your own family budget—and help the nation as a whole—*by co-operating in the observance and enforcement of price control*.

We are trying to beat Hitler and all that he stands for. We must do everything that strengthens the national effort for this purpose. In peacetime, price control would be neither *necessary* nor *possible*. Under the conditions of the present war, price control *is* necessary, but it will be possible only if it is loyally accepted and put into practice as a patriotic duty by *all* the people of Canada. We *must* have steady prices if we are to produce the munitions of war on the greatest possible scale, and at the same time give each individual the security of knowing what a pay envelope will buy.

And so, you women who are the nation's shoppers, must keep your minds on prices and values *even more than ever before*.

I have said before that Canadian women are the guardians of the price law. This is *true* because women buy four out of every five dollars' worth of goods sold at retail in Canada. It is you women who must see that you get value for your money. It is you who must determine whether the most valuable use is being made of the materials, manpower, and factories that are available to produce goods for use in your homes.

The job the Government of Canada is now asking you to do is to see that the prices of the goods you buy *do not rise any higher*—to see that the country as a whole gets the most value out of the manpower, equipment and materials necessary for the production of *civilian* goods so that all possible manpower, equipment and material can be used for war purposes. Only in that way can we achieve the maximum production of war supplies.

*This is your job*—this is the great task you can now perform. This is the work that *you*, the women of Canada, can do most thoroughly.

The Wartime Prices and Trade Board will have offices throughout Canada. Each office will be staffed with investigators and enforcement officers because the Price Ceiling must and will be maintained. But I am sure you will agree that in a

democratic country *respect* for the law, and not compulsion, should ensure obedience. Retailers in general are giving splendid co-operation—many of them are cheerfully making financial sacrifices for the present, in order to sell at prices under the retail ceiling. Manufacturers and wholesalers are also co-operating and so it may develop that the principal duty of the investigators and enforcement officers at our regional offices will be to supply information and help you when doubts arise. If there are definite infractions of the law, the necessary steps will promptly be taken, but the real strength of the law should be *your loyal support*.

Now then, let me tell you, what you, the women of Canada, can start doing right now to support the Price Ceiling plan.

The first thing to do is to write down a list of all the things you buy most frequently. Write it down in a notebook, or scribbler, or whatever is handy. Enter food and clothing items particularly. Add to your list the articles you buy at the drug store, the hardware store, or any other stores at which you shop.

You should run lines down each page dividing it into four columns. You should enter in the first column the list of goods you buy. In the next column you should write down helpful details about each of the items you usually buy—such as quality, type, and so forth. *That* column is very important, because if it is accurate you will be able to compare *values* as well as prices the next time you buy.

In the third column you should write down the names of the stores in which you bought these articles. That is important too because under the Price Ceiling different stores may charge different prices; but no store may charge more than the highest price it charged in the period of September 15th to October 11th.

So now your list includes names of the commodities you buy most frequently, full descriptions so that you can compare values, and in the third column you have the names of the stores where you bought the goods.

In the fourth column you should write down the highest price which the stores where you shop were charging for each article during the period September 15th to October 11th.

Of course, I know you will have some difficulties finding out the highest prices charged during that period for all of the things you buy. If you cannot get *all* the prices for that period, the next best thing is to put down *today's prices* because our reports indicate that, in general, retail prices today are not above the ceiling.

You will not put down "bargain" or "special sale" prices. The price you want to know is the highest price each store has been charging, because in future you should not pay more than that price in *that* store.

You will remember also that certain commodities are exempt from the Price Ceiling law. For instance, the Price Ceiling does not apply to seasonal fluctuations in prices of fresh fruits and vegetables, because



it stands to reason that these products should not be sold at the same price all year round. It does not apply to animal pets, nor to fur coats, and Christmas trees are also exempt. If you are at any time in doubt as to whether some commodity is subject to the law, you can always get information by enquiring at the nearest office of the Prices and Supply Representative who represents the Board in your territory.

Now, let me summarize the main points in this new war job the women of Canada are asked to undertake.

You are to make a list of the commodities you buy most frequently. You will put down a detailed description of each article, giving the necessary details about quality, type or grade, so that you can make a proper comparison the next time you buy it. You will write down the name of the store where you bought it. You are to write down the highest prices charged in that store for these commodities during the period September 15th to October 11th. If these prices cannot be obtained, you will put down today's prices.

This list is going to become one of your most useful possessions in the months to come. Whenever you buy a product you will be able to consult your list and say: "Yes, that store's price is under the ceiling. That seems to be good value." Or once in a while you may consult your list and say: "The price this dealer is charging is above his price ceiling." Perhaps he has made a mistake—so you should bring the matter to his atten-

tion at once. If you discover what seems to be deliberate evasion of the Price Ceiling law, report the fact in writing, with all the detail you can, to the nearest local office of the War-time Prices and Trade Board. If you cannot locate one near you, write to the War-time Prices and Trade Board, Ottawa, and the matter will be dealt with.

You will find a full explanation of this plan for making your own Price Ceiling list in your daily newspaper tomorrow, and in the next issue of your weekly papers, and tomorrow night at the same time, Dr. Charlotte Whitton will speak to you about this great war task for women, and will give you further information.

Within the past few days I have had the privilege of discussing the plan with the heads of most of the national women's organizations in Canada. These women came to Ottawa specially for a conference on this subject. I was most impressed by their zeal, their keen desire to help. I am glad I can tell you that they have pledged the full support of their members, *nearly a million strong*, that *already* through their chapters and branches in all parts of Canada they are setting the wheels in motion to enlist the complete co-operation of their organizations. We start with nearly a million Canadian women pledged to this cause. Now I ask for the support of the other two million women of Canada. I ask it confidently because I know that you will proudly seize this opportunity to make another vital contribution to your country's war effort and to the defeat of Hitler.



# To the Women of Canada

## Here is One Big War Job which You Alone Can Do

### "Ceiling Prices" Must Be Maintained

This is an appeal to the women of Canada. There is one vital part of our war effort which depends on you.

Your government has placed a "ceiling" on retail prices. You are the buyers of four out of every five dollars worth of all the goods sold in this country. Your whole-hearted help is needed in this price control plan. If every woman does her part, it cannot fail.

Its success will be a big step on the road to victory. Its failure would be a serious blow to our war effort. You can tip the balance towards success.

Will you, then, undertake to make the successful control of commodity prices an established fact? We know you will. And we know that when you undertake this task it is as good as done.

### This is the work you are asked to do

#### 1. Make a list of commodities

We want you to sit down today and make a list of the things you buy from week to week and from month to month. Write down food and clothing items in particular, because these account for the biggest share of your expenditures. But we want you to list those articles you buy at the drug store, hardware store, and other stores, too.

#### 2. Make notes about quality

Now go over your list again and mark down the necessary details about quality, type, grade and size. Then when making future purchases you will be able to compare values as well as prices.

#### 3. Write down prices

After each item we want you to write down, if you can, the highest price charged at your store during the period September 15 to October 11, 1941. If you cannot remember the prices charged during that period, fill in your list with today's prices. Our survey shows that retailers, with few exceptions, are keeping prices well within the "ceiling" levels. As exceptions are being discovered they are being quickly brought into line.

#### 4. Keep this list—use it when you buy!

Make up this price list neatly and accurately. You will not be able to get all the items at once. Keep adding to your list from day to day. Make it your permanent check list—your personal safeguard against any further rise in prices.

#### Prices May be Different in Different Stores

There has always been a difference in prices in different stores—even stores in the same locality. This may depend on the kind of service the store gives, or the way it operates. Some stores, for instance, have delivery service, give credit, or provide other extra services.

Under the new Price Ceiling Order there will still be differences in prices at different stores. The new price regulations will not do away with competition. The highest prices in any particular store must not be higher than the highest prices in force *in that store* during the period September 15 to October 11. They may be a little lower or a little higher than the prices in other stores.

The prices *you* will mark down will be the highest prices charged at the stores where *you* shop.

#### A Few Points to Remember

1. The ceiling price is not necessarily the price *you* paid. It is the highest price at which the store sold the particular item between September 15 and October 11.

2. A merchant may reduce his prices for sales or other reasons—he may also raise them provided they do not go above the ceiling price.

3. Variations in seasonal prices on fresh fruits and vegetables are permitted. Rulings on seasonal markets will be announced from time to time by the Wartime Prices and Trade Board in newspapers and over the radio.

4. Fill out your price list without bothering your merchant. In many cases he is making a financial sacrifice to sell under the price ceiling. The war has left him short staffed.

### Items most frequently bought

This is not intended as a complete list. It is simply offered as a guide. Add to it the other items you buy or expect to buy.

Item	Description (Size, Quality, etc.)	Store	Price	Item	Description (Size, Quality, etc.)	Store	Price
<b>FOOD</b>				<b>CLOTHING</b> (Men's, Women's, Children's)			
Milk.....				Coats.....			
Butter.....				Sweaters.....			
Shortening.....				Suits.....			
Eggs.....				Dresses.....			
Sugar.....				Skirts.....			
Tea, Coffee.....				Blouses.....			
Flour.....				Shirts.....			
Cereals.....				Underwear.....			
Bread.....				Nightgowns, Pyjamas.....			
Meat.....				Boots and shoes.....			
Canned Salmon.....				Rubbers.....			
Canned Goods.....				Goloshes.....			
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>				Stockings.....			
Laundry and cleaning.....				Socks.....			
Soaps and other cleansing agents.....				Hats.....			
Blankets.....				Gloves.....			
Sheets, Towels.....							

### Why you must do your part

To ensure the success of this price control plan, every woman in Canada should make a list. Retailers are showing a splendid spirit of co-operation. The great majority of them are determined to make this plan work, but if *you* do not co-operate the whole plan might fail—prices might start to skyrocket. So keep your list handy. Check the prices you pay against it.

If a price seems higher than the ceiling, ask your merchant about it. If further information is necessary, report the full details in writing. Address your letter to the Prices and Supply Representative, Wartime Prices and Trade Board, at any of the following: Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, North Bay, London, Toronto, Brockville, Montreal, Quebec City, Saint John, Halifax, Charlottetown.