

*Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*

two speeches which have been made by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) on behalf of the Conservative party and by the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin). In acknowledging those speeches, I should like to thank the hon. members of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs who spent many days listening to a great range of witnesses from manufacturers associations, consumer organizations and the department in the course of examining the provisions of this bill. Some 23 sittings of the committee were held and the committee heard representations from 13 organizations in addition to hearing from myself and my officials. In addition, of course, the committee had to take account of numerous briefs and submissions from organizations which were not personally represented.

• (5:40 p.m.)

As the hon. member mentioned, a number of amendments were made in committee, including some important amendments. I acknowledge freely the germination of the ideas behind them; some of the points arose from ideas put forward by members of the opposition. I think the bill is a better bill today than it was when it went into committee, because of the suggestions by the government and the opposition, including the hon. member for St. John's East. I think that is not a criticism of me or of the bill, or the government and the bill it introduced. Rather, it is to the credit of the parliamentary system and is an indication that Parliament is working. It also gives credit to the government and puts the lie to the allegation that the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) is always making that we are an arrogant government and do not care about the parliamentary process. As a matter of fact, I am delighted that the hon. member for St. John's East acknowledged that a number of amendments suggested by the official opposition had been accepted by me on behalf of the government. I think it is true that every bill I have introduced has been amended in committee. As I say, that is not a criticism of me or of my bills, but rather a credit to the parliamentary system and the operation of the democratic processes in this country.

I have mentioned this because we have now reached third reading stage and it has been indicated that the bill will have the unanimous support of every member of the House. I think this is significant in view of the remarks made by the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre in, I think, amusing the House in describing the interview—which I must admit I have not seen—given by the president of Lever Bros., Mr. Lockwood, who was critical of what was going on in the consumer movement.

It seems to me that Mr. Lockwood and his colleagues should take note of the fact that the members of the House of Commons of Canada, duly elected from all parts of Canada, have considered this bill very carefully, have considered it in numerous hearings before its committee, have listened to briefs from manufacturing groups, producer groups and consumer groups, and as a result of all such deliberations have come to the conclusion that the bill is needed and should be supported

[Mr. Basford.]

unanimously by Social Crediters, members of the New Democratic Party, members of the Conservative party and members of the government. If I were John Lockwood, the president of Lever Bros., or Colgate, I would consider this fact a pretty reliable consumer survey of what should be the law of this country. There are those in industry who support and are sympathetic to what the consumer movement is trying to do. I think those who do not fall into this category should take note of what is happening in this House this afternoon.

I also hope that those gentlemen in the other place who form the other part of this Parliament, and who sometimes have not been sympathetic to legislation introduced by the consumer affairs department will take note, not of editorials in the *Financial Post* or in the *Financial Times*, but of the fact that this bill is passing the House of Commons this afternoon, and passing unanimously. As a result, I trust they will treat this bill sympathetically when it arrives in the other place.

May I mention with your permission, Mr. Speaker, one other matter. In order to correct a misapprehension that has arisen, I would draw the attention of the House to the fact that in my statement on second reading, in raising the question of bilingual labelling, an error appears at page 2128 of *Hansard* for December 16, the third line from the bottom of the first column. I inadvertently omitted one line of my statement, and as a result some confusion has been caused with regard to bilingual labelling of imported products. At that time I was announcing that it was government policy to require, as a general practice, that consumer products that are subject to federal legislation be labelled in both official languages. Under the present practice some laws specify either one language or the other; some make no mention of language. Only the Hazardous Products Act and the Food and Drug Act specify labels in both languages.

As I was announcing in December, over the next few years all consumer products subject to federal legislation will progressively have to meet the bilingual labelling requirement, so that as quickly as practical and practicable bilingual labelling shall be mandatory at the point of manufacture. It is recognized that imports may require special attention to ensure that foreign suppliers are aware of the bilingual requirements. So, I want to emphasize that every effort will be made to encourage the earliest implementation of these new rules for imported products in order that they may conform, along with domestic products,—and that was the part left out of my earlier statement—to the five year target date that I announced in December. As I indicated, an interdepartmental committee will establish guidelines to ensure an orderly and efficient transition to this new policy.

I do not want to prolong the debate. I do once again want to thank hon. members for the attention and care they gave the bill during the course of debate both in the House and during the committee hearings. I am particularly grateful for the amendment made by the hon. member for St. John's East in the committee, as well as for those moved by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) and Regina-Lake Centre.