

the job which they should. That is our position.

I read the evidence contained in the Green book, the discussions which took place and the examinations conducted by the officials of the Restrictive Trade Practices Branch. I read the evidence given before the Hall royal commission. I read the statements prepared by the authorities of the province of Alberta. In that regard I want to pay tribute to the province of Alberta, to Dr. Ross, and to a particular friend of mine and a friend of many hon. members in this chamber, Mr. James Frawley, who made this particular project his own and did a great deal of work. He is entitled to a lot of credit for what he has done.

I have read part of the evidence given before the parliamentary committee on food and drugs in 1964 and 1965, which dealt almost exclusively with the question of safety and control of drugs. I have read a lot of the evidence given before the special committee, the Harley committee, in 1966 and 1967, and I would like to recall for the memory of the house one of the statements made in the recommendations of the 1964 and 1965 parliamentary committee on food and drugs.

One of its recommendations is that the inspection of quality control methods here and abroad should be carried out by the Food and Drug Directorate. If felt necessary by the Food and Drug Directorate, this quality control check was to be carried out by any importer before a drug is released for use in Canada. If this inspection is not carried out or does not meet our standards, the imported drug should not be released for use in Canada. That was coupled with a number of other recommendations.

I would assume it is the government's view that these and other similar recommendations are met by clause 5 of the bill which empowers the government to pass orders in council. I will not bother to read that clause but I think it is quite plain the intention is that the Food and Drug Directorate would make recommendations to the government which, in turn, would be incorporated into regulations. I am not happy about that. It seems to me that if it is possible for the government to set down in detail in this bill the various steps it proposes should be taken to reduce the price of drugs, then that should be accompanied at this stage by fairly specific proposals which the government intends to take in the future. This important matter should not be left to the good faith of the

Patent Act—Trade Marks Act

government and the Food and Drug Directorate.

I am not questioning the good faith of the Food and Drug Directorate but this subject is something with which we cannot trifle. In effect, by clause 5, the government is saying it is underwriting and guaranteeing that the quality of drugs brought into Canada as a result of the legislative changes envisaged when this bill is passed will be effective, efficient and safe. I want to say to the government that this is a very heavy responsibility to bear. Should there be injury, death or disaster, following the passage of this bill, as a result of the failure of the Food and Drug Directorate or of the government to introduce regulations which provide these safety features, the responsibility will lie squarely on the government. This is a responsibility it must be prepared to assume.

When the bill gets into committee it will be possible for members of the committee to make proposals, by way of amendment or otherwise, to improve the legislation. I am quite confident it is susceptible of improvement and change under the new rules under which we now operate. The committee is the place where this can be done.

I hope no undue restrictions will be placed on the committee in its effort to improve this legislation and to extract from the government something more specific than is contained within the four corners of clause 5 of the bill. I think this is something which members of this party who have spoken have stressed over and over again, as it was their duty to do. I think they would have been derelict in discharging their responsibility under the oath they have taken as members' of this house had they, with the special knowledge they have, failed to emphasize this fact. I believe they are entitled to approbation from this house for making this point so strongly on many occasions. This is the position we take. I hope this bill will pass through the second reading stage, will be committed to the standing committee tonight, and that this committee will undertake its duty to examine this legislation as soon as possible.

● (8:50 p.m.)

Mr. Ian Watson (Laprairie): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe any member of this house opposes the principal objective of this bill which is the lowering of drug prices to the Canadian consumer. The minister indicated that the bill which is presently before us is