

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

ing of a product which adds to the pollution of our waterways. One of them, at least, mistakenly believed this product had already been banned by the government. The natural reaction of the women was to collect as many of the unwanted samples as possible and send them to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in the hope that he would do something to stop the nuisance. Evidently they were not aware that this matter falls within the responsibility of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Equally evident, the minister is not yet prepared to take this particular responsibility seriously.

• (10:10 p.m.)

Admittedly my question provoked amusement, dealing as it did with Arctic Power detergent in the midst of heated exchanges about Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic and the United States' reaction to the Canadian declaration. But equally admittedly the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs took advantage of the lighthearted moment to slither away quickly from my question about what he proposed to do to protect consumers from the practice of unsolicited door-to-door dumping of samples. In his reply to my question he said:

I will examine the situation to see whether it is within the terms of reference of the Arctic pollution bill.

Fair enough. But, fun and games aside, it is the job of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to provide legislation to protect the consumer from a number of advertising and merchandising practices which constitute a constant source of irritation and added expense to the consumer. There is the business of unsolicited samples, some of which are dangerous to children. There is unsolicited advertising—letters, circulars and brochures which fill the garbage cans and wastebaskets of householders everywhere. There is the deceptive and mysterious practice of "cents off" advertising. Someone sent me a bottle of coffee marked "cents off" the other day. Cents off what? There is the two-package "deal" in razor blades which someone sent to my office a few days ago. They had four different prices marked on them, along with the encouraging admonition to "save 39 cents".

These things may seem amusing and scarcely worth the attention of members of this august chamber, but I can assure them that to the housewife who is struggling with 50 kinds of frustration they are unwarranted nuisances. Then there is the advertising of

fruit drinks which have never had any fruit near them, and jelly desserts so fresh with fruit that one would swear they had just fallen from the tree. Yet they contain no fruit, even though many a mother congratulates herself on building up her children's health with such concentrated goodness from orchard and garden.

I realize that the minister has made a start on consumer protection in a number of directions. There is the hazardous products legislation, the provisions respecting the sizing of children's clothing and a number of other measures. But there is need of vigorous action along the lines I have mentioned tonight—action to ban house-to-house distribution of unsolicited samples, action to prohibit deceptive and fraudulent advertising and the peddling of products which are not what they seem to be. I would ask the minister to make a real start in this direction and earn the gratitude of all long-suffering consumers.

Mr. R. J. Orange (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the hon. lady has once again taken up the cudgels on behalf of the housewives of Canada. Together with many other people she is attempting to control the use of phosphates in our society. She is a member of the Standing Committee on National Resources which is presently studying the Canada Water Bill, and I must say she is one of our strongest supporters with respect to, hopefully, the abolition of phosphates from detergents throughout Canada.

Listening to the hon. lady I felt, as a male who works in the House of Commons and who has to look after a constituency, a sense of regret that I do not have more opportunities to go shopping and price the coffee and other commodities which we find on the shelves of the stores. I only wish more of us had the relationship with the housewives of Canada the hon. lady has, so that we might learn more about the things which affect consumers. I am not being facetious when I say that. We as parliamentarians face this problem of trying to determine somehow or other what is right for the people who live in this country, not least of whom are the housewives who have to live within the family budget during the course of any given two-week or one-month period.

I think that the Minister of Consumer Affairs, in the job he is trying to do of bringing consumer items closer to the people of Canada so they will understand better what