

*Hazardous Substances*

to the minister the power he requires but ensure that the decision of the minister comes back to parliament. Instead of giving him unlimited power to legislate, let us give him perhaps six months. If he decides to take a product off the market, then within the six months he would come to parliament and ask parliament to put it on one of the schedules. I hope the minister, and perhaps the hon. member for Peace River, will consider this proposition as an attempt to recognize the difficulty which the minister might encounter by not having the power to remove an item from the market which is not in the schedule now but which may obviously be a hazard to health in his judgment.

I am very pleased to see this bill come before parliament. It represents one more nail in the coffin of Mr. Caveat Emptor. Mr. Buyer-Beware has been buried with very little mourning. The government is accepting its responsibility to take a look at the hazardous substances that come on the market and to protect the public from the sale of them.

I would like to make a number of points on this subject. When the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) spoke he raised the question of cigarettes as a hazardous substance. I notice that the bill does not deal with cigarettes, but where it deals with advertising it seems to give a rather broad definition of that term. I wonder whether it could not be made quite evident that it is not only advertising that will be prohibited if the substance is considered dangerous to the public. For example, if one considers cigarette advertising, the manufacturers may be anticipating that some legislation will be passed soon restricting their ability to advertise cigarettes. They are already moving into a whole new range of gimmicks which may not be classified as advertising but which may very well be transferring expenditure in the publicity department from one form of promotion to another. I refer to such things as giving-away large sums of money, cars and so on. I think that the definition of advertising should be made clearer in order to ensure that it covers all types of promotion. In some cases, such promotions may be more damaging than advertising. I am thinking of door to door sampling and things of this type. I think it is fairly important for the minister to make sure that such a possibility does not exist.

● (8:30 p.m.)

There is one omission from this bill. Looking at clause 8, this bill lists what shall not be

put on the market. I think that to be completely effective or to be more effective the bill should also include what must be put on the market. I am thinking particularly of containers which may be hazardous in themselves. They may contain hazardous or semi-hazardous substances, yet the container may be more dangerous than its contents—pill boxes of various kinds. I am wondering what provision the minister is considering to take care of this particular problem.

A while ago I raised the question of glue sniffing. I am pleased to see that glues are covered by this bill and that the minister will have power to remove them from sale. No one at this point can be certain what the answer to this problem might be. Eliminating the sale of glue might help in some cases, or legislation in terms of assisting persons who sniff glue by recognizing this as a psychiatric problem. I have a private members' bill to that effect.

The power to help is contained in this bill. I think all those concerned with this problem will breathe somewhat more easily knowing that, upon examination or following research, the government does have the power to take glue or substances similar to glue off the market or ask that they be modified in some way to make them less dangerous.

The overall impression I get of this bill is that while there is a schedule of some specific things such as bleaches, this term encompasses a whole area of production; namely, cleansers, sanitizers or household goods containing chlorine. There is a remarkably wide range of products covered by that definition. The impression one gets is that the minister will possess very great powers to act. Perhaps the big question which arises in my mind at this point is to what extent he will be willing to act and to what extent will he and his department be vigilant in the pursuit of these hazardous substances. It is not enough to have a bill which says certain things can be done. We know the government has all kinds of legislation now under which it could act in other areas and it has been very reluctant to take action; it has not used its power enough, rather than over-used its power, as is the fear of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin).

Let me in closing congratulate the minister on this bill. I think it is a very good step in the right direction. I indicate I will support an amendment reviving the one deleted by the Senate, perhaps putting a time factor into