

Non-Smokers' Health Act

A survey to ascertain the views of federal Members of Parliament on the issue of smoking in the workplace was conducted by the Non-Smokers' Rights Association. It indicated that 85 per cent of the Members of Parliament who responded support or are sympathetic to non-smokers' rights in the workplace, 89 per cent of the respondents favour the establishment of non-smoking areas in the workplace, and 78 per cent of the Members of Parliament who responded believe that Treasury Board should order all Deputy Ministers to establish non-smoking work areas. In addition—and this is the interesting statistic which I hope in time will follow through to a material result—only 22 per cent of the Members of Parliament who responded were opposed to supporting a Private Member's Bill dealing with the problem of smoking in workplaces under federal jurisdiction.

As a non-smoker I am very sympathetic to the problem created by side-stream smoke in the workplace. As a Member of Parliament I believe that the health and rights of non-smokers should be respected. Perhaps it is difficult for me to recognize and accept the problems of smokers, but I believe the rights of non-smokers are more important.

In other ways the federal Government is concerned about the devastating effects of smoking on Canadians. It has already put into place policies and programs which aim to reduce tobacco consumption in the country. The Government has been active in developing a policy on tobacco which is both comprehensive and health oriented. Accordingly, I support—and I believe the Government supports it—the essence and spirit of this Private Member's Bill which attempts to protect Canadians from the hazards of smoking.

I could outline many areas this afternoon which I think are important as far as some of the government initiatives are concerned. The Department of National Health and Welfare devotes thousands of dollars each year to carry out routine monitoring of tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide levels of cigarettes and to perform tobacco smoke analysis and research. It also conducts epidemiological studies and behavioural research on selected tobacco topics such as the effect of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke. Surveys to monitor the rate of tobacco consumption among Canadians are also undertaken.

The entire program falls under the "Break Free for a New Generation of Non-Smokers" theme. To date the program has been spearheaded by a national advertising campaign targeted at youth aged 12 years to 19 years. The youth message has been produced in rock video style for television and radio featuring the break-free theme and challenging young people

to be themselves, to go their own way, and to break free from the pressures of smoking.

The federal Government has also met with representatives of the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council with a view toward taking stronger action on tobacco advertising and promotion. There have been serious concerns expressed by many Canadians about the effectiveness of the Council's current voluntary code on tobacco advertising and promotion. Several options are being considered, and I hope legislative measures restricting tobacco advertising will become a real possibility.

Recently the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) proposed a new air regulation to ban smoking on Canadian aircraft for both domestic and transborder flights of less than two hours. The action is a positive step in ensuring that the travelling public is protected from involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke.

The federal Government plans to build upon these accomplishments in order to continue the decline in the rate of smoking. Surveys of public attitudes indicate that Canadians favour current initiatives in this direction. Enhancement of the federal Government tobacco policy must be directed toward improving the protection of Canadians against tobacco smoke.

I hope in the course of time that all Hon. Members of the House will see fit to support the type of legislation being debated this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap).

Mr. Heap: Madam Speaker, I would prefer, if other Members are agreeable, to call it five o'clock now, rather than speak for two minutes and leave it at that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 36(2) this order shall be dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

It being five o'clock, this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 3(1).

The House adjourned at 4.59 p.m.