

Oral Questions

While this is a partial victory for those who have worked for several years on foetal alcohol syndrome, it is not a partial problem but is the leading cause of mental retardation in Canada.

Will the government meet its federal responsibility and begin a national label warning program that deals with this serious national health problem?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the foetal alcohol syndrome report was tabled in the House. Indeed, it was very well done and I want to congratulate the committee and its members.

Various recommendations were put forward, one of which was alcohol warning labels. We do get into research and also education. Although the minister has quickly reviewed this report, he will do an intensive study of it and will respond within the 150 days. Warning labels is one area in which he would be most interested. We will certainly be talking to all provincial governments in relation to this.

• (1510)

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, my supplemental is for the same minister. On April 1, in answer to my question concerning warning labels, the minister of health replied: "If there is a unanimous position by the ministers of health to do something about it, we will certainly consider their recommendation."

Is the minister taking this unanimous report to the provincial ministers of health at their meeting in Ottawa today? Is he actively seeking their approval to get effective warning labels and effective signage in all drinking establishments adopted in all provinces and all territories in Canada?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in all fairness, the report was tabled I believe between 10 and 10.30 this morning. I am not quite sure if the minister has had a chance to review every recommendation specifically. I know he is most interested in the warning labels, not only on the bottles or the cans of the substance itself, but also with regard to drinking establishments.

I have to say that only by working together with our provincial counterparts and the public will we be able to resolve this very serious issue.

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FIREARMS

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister answering for the Minister of Justice.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General has for the past several weeks been hearing representations with respect to the regulations pertaining to the firearms legislation, Bill C-17.

Virtually all of those representations have called for a less violent society and yet there are some very significant ironies revealed. For example, the new legislation contains special arrangements for the use of fully automatic firearms in theatre and movie productions which will indirectly incite far more violence than will ownership of those weapons by legitimate gun collectors.

Will the government await the report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General before implementing the new regulations? Will it heed the recommendations of the standing committee based on the representations which it has had from across Canada?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his question.

There have been extensive consultations with user groups before, during and after the legislative process. The minister set up an advisory group in which the user groups had representations as to the firearms regulations. The firearms regulations were published with plenty of time for input from the public and the user groups. That input is now before the justice committee, as are the regulations.

I can assure my hon. friend the government has every intention of treating the report of the justice committee seriously in order that we can get the best regime possible to have safety for the public and at the same time to allow the user groups that use firearms legitimately to go about their business.