

committee will provide a positive contribution and lead to a step in the right direction with regard to the handicapped.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I think the credo of the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled bears repeating: "When you see a disabled person, see a person."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): There being no items on the order paper under the heading of private bills, the House will proceed to notices of motions (papers).

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, there are two notices of motions before No. 30. I wonder if we could have the unanimous consent of the House to deal with No. 30 and to stand Nos. 19 and 22.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): Is it the pleasure of the House to stand, by unanimous consent, motions Nos. 19 and 22?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[English]

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS—SOFT DRINK BOTTLES

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity) moved:

That an order of the House do issue for copies of all socio-economic impact studies carried out by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in connection with banning returnable soft drink bottles.

She said: Mr. Speaker, on June 28, following reports of injuries caused to consumers by carbonated soft drink bottles which exploded when tipped over or dropped, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lawrence) announced his intention of regulating, under the Hazardous Products Act "all pressurized glass containers causing bodily harm from flying glass".

The minister at that point requested soft drink manufacturers to stop distribution of, and retailers to remove from sale, the torpedo-shaped, narrow-neck 1.5 litre bottles. In the course of that statement, the minister further said, "I will discuss with the provinces any problems that might be caused by provincial legislation concerning bottles".

On August 7, the minister announced that all 1.5 litre or larger carbonated soft drink bottles, wide-necked as well as narrow-necked, would be regulated under the Hazardous Products Act. He said:

Broader based standards covering other pressurized glass containers are also being developed and will eventually be made operative so that all such containers will have standardized safety tests.

Socio-Economic Impact Studies

On August 28 the minister announced that the ban on all 1.5 litre carbonated soft drink glass bottles would continue until bottle designs provide substantial protection from injury from flying glass. He went on to say:

When such a bottle is developed by using either a plastic film coating or some other means of retention, I intend to propose that the ban be rescinded and that appropriate regulations be introduced for 1.5 litre glass bottles or carbonated non-alcoholic beverages. I also want to make it clear that although 1.5 litre bottles have posed the greatest and most immediate problem, regulations for other sizes of carbonated soft drink bottles will be phased in over a period of time.

● (1710)

Since August 28, the minister has apparently made no further move, and in response to questions in committee said that the ball was in the industry's court, that it was up to the industry to come up with safe containers. But also, even more surprisingly, he said that it was up to the industry to propose the tests against which safety will be measured.

I find this abdication of responsibility on the minister's part very difficult to understand. The minister acted quickly in placing the bottles under the Hazardous Products Act because he considered the matter important from the point of view of public safety. No one would question that the duty of a minister of consumer affairs is indeed to act to protect the public safety. But the minister has been seized of this problem since June and now at the end of November, practically six months later, he is no nearer to offering the consumer clear information on standards.

While soft drinks are not an essential nutritional item, they do find a place in most families' budgets. The consumer who can no longer buy the family size bottle has no assurance from the minister that the smaller bottle is safe either.

The minister has spoken of plastic coated bottles. There is an expensive Japanese technology for plastic coating bottles which is likely to add considerably to the cost of the product, a cost which will eventually pass to the consumer. A Canadian company is developing a technology and has applied to the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Industry (Mr. Huntington) for assistance to develop that process, but we do not know whether the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has consulted his colleague, the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Industry on this matter.

The minister undertook to consult with the provinces. We do not know from the minister what the response has been. The deputy minister of the environment in Ontario has publicly criticized the ban imposed by the minister of consumer affairs; the Quebec minister of the environment has also criticized the ban. The provinces, for environmental reasons and for reasons concerned with energy conservation, prefer the use of returnable glass bottles rather than further use of non-refillables. In fact, Saskatchewan has an absolute ban on the sale of soft drinks in non-returnable bottles.

The bottling industry, which in most cases means small Canadian-owned franchise operations, finds itself with thousands of dollars of unusable inventory of 1.5 litre glass bottles which was used as collateral for bank loans. As the banks call