

take the necessary precautions to eliminate the dangerous effects of uncontrolled use.

● (5:50 p.m.)

Until now, this seems to corroborate the view expressed in my first remarks, namely that it is always advisable to recall to consumers as best we can the hazards of certain products.

Publicity in particular shows another inconvenience. In fact, in his endeavour to increase sales as much as possible, the advertiser can be carried away by his enthusiasm, magnify the products' value and even attribute to it proprieties it has not and thus promote it in a way which, consciously or not may be considered misleading or fraudulent.

However, because of this double possibility it behooves the authorities to protect the public against health hazards and fraud by controlling under adequate laws standards governing contents manufacture, labelling and advertisement of these products. Obviously, such measures cannot suppress all possibilities of more or less serious accidents, as can be deduced from annual statistics. I believe that besides passing laws the government must also help inform the public on measures to be taken both to prevent accidents and to correct their effects.

I believe that so far the government has carried out its responsibilities in this field, not only to protect the public through legislative measures but also to inform the people on the dangers of poisonings and on the aid to be given when they occur. For instance, we can recall that the Department of National Health and Welfare, in co-operation with the provincial health departments, established poison control centres a few years ago. It is said that there are about 250 of these in Canada and around 1957 the Food and Drug Directorate established a central information bureau for poison control. This bureau collects information to be used in the fight against accidents by poisoning.

We know that the government has taken a great number of measures in order to counteract the dangers created by the use and abuse of drugs.

There are some facts which are interesting to recall. For instance, the statistics for the year 1968 showed that nearly 75 per cent of the reports received from control centres concerned children under five years of age and out of a total of 41,700 cases of poisoning, 20.2 per cent had been due to headache tablets, 38.1 per cent to other drugs; 40.2 per cent to domestic products other than drugs; and 1.5 per cent to products of an unspecified nature.

In view of the high percentage of accidents caused by headache tablets, namely those containing acetylsalicylic acid, the government took special steps to protect the public, and particularly children, with regard to the use of such drugs, either by indicating the contents with special symbols, or by advising the users about special precautions.

Food and Drugs Act

Obviously, as the member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo (Mr. Howe) said a while ago, a child of five cannot understand what is written on the container, or read the warning on appliances. But we know that the parents, and more particularly the mother, watch the child. The mother is more than anyone else interested in reading what is written on containers or equipment. She is the one we can bank on to take precautions and keep the children away from danger.

We know the government took adequate steps to protect the public against drugs.

Recently, a letter containing commercial information was sent to pharmacists, asking them to use containers and locking devices in accordance with applicable standards when they are selling drugs prescribed by doctors.

Some of the provisions I have just mentioned apply only to drugs but they can show the way for effective control of various products to protect the public against health hazards by making them aware of deceptive information.

As I was saying, the bill introduced by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), does not seem to provide any further protection since all the devices covered by the bill are already adequately covered by the Hazardous Products Act.

It seems to me also that the household products and appliances covered in the bill are not food, drugs, cosmetics, medical devices, and that consequently, they should probably not come under the Food and Drugs Act.

It is obvious that there was a serious gap as far as the protection of the public against those products is concerned, but I think that it has been filled by the passage of the Hazardous Products Act in 1969. We know that it is administered by the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Since the carrying out of various measures comes either under the Department of National Health and Welfare or the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, this can give rise to complications at the public level. However, there seems to be very good co-operation, the Department of National Health and Welfare acting as scientific adviser to the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

I could also refer to Part I and Part II of the Hazardous Products Act. For example, the products referred to in Part II of the Annex can be sold to the public, provided that they are labelled in French and in English, in accordance with the regulations, so that all Canadians may understand.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business having expired, I do now leave the chair to resume the same at eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.