

advertising which promotes consumption of beverage alcohol. Overall, the Canadian alcohol industry spends huge sums on product advertising and promotion. Professor Gurprit Kindra of the University of Ottawa provided the following statistics to the Sub-Committee:

"The beer and ale industry of Canada spends about 6.9% of their sales on advertising. Molson Breweries spent \$65 million on advertising in 1991 and Labatt was among the top 10 in Canada, with a 1991 expenditure of \$50 million. Health and Welfare estimates the entire alcohol industry in Canada spends \$250 million on advertising, promotion, and sponsorships."³⁸

Almost all of the non-industry witnesses who appeared before us testified that warning labels on alcoholic products should be part of the overall strategy to raise public awareness of the risks posed to the foetus by maternal alcohol consumption. Most witnesses, in part, based their support for warning labels on the consumers' right to know that the use of a product carries certain risks. Dr. Oscar Casiro:

"I strongly support and recommend the labelling of all alcoholic beverage containers. It is our duty to inform people of the dangers of drinking during pregnancy at the time they are going to have their drink. This label should be clear and should be in contrasting colours and in large print."³⁹

In 1989, the Canadian Medical Association's (CMA) General Council passed a resolution that "the CMA urge governments in Canada to enact legislation requiring that all alcoholic beverages sold in Canada be labelled with warnings on the hazards from the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy."⁴⁰ Dr. Richard Jock of the Assembly of First Nations stated that "implementing a labelling initiative would send a clear message to the public that (FAS/FAE) is a concern."⁴¹

An irony that has not escaped the Sub-Committee's notice is the fact that the United States Government requires warning labels on containers of beverage alcohol sold in that country, and has done so since 1989. Canadian distillers, and to a lesser extent Canadian brewers, market their products in the United States. All of these products contain warning labels. Mr. Guy Paquet of the Association of Canadian Distillers stated:

"As an industry, we meet all the regulations required of us in the countries where we sell our products. Indeed, in the United States we put warning labels specified by the federal government in the U.S. on the products we export from Canadian manufacturers to the U.S."⁴²

This incongruity also was not overlooked by the witnesses who appeared before us. Mrs. Shirley Joiner, an adoptive mother of an FAE boy made the following statement:

"It's my understanding that all the alcohol produced in Canada and exported to the United States does carry that labelling. Don't we deserve the same education on our beverages, all alcoholic beverages? Such legislation could be instrumental in preventing alcohol-related birth defects."⁴³

³⁸ Proceedings, Issue 14, p. 16.

³⁹ Proceedings, Issue 8, p. 24.

⁴⁰ Proceedings, Issue 13, p. 6.

⁴¹ Proceedings, Issue 10, p. 6.

⁴² Proceedings, Issue 11, p. 11.

⁴³ Proceedings, Issue 12, p. 17.