

I had always been interested in the tremendous amount of noise and commotion that has been made by the Consumers Association of Canada. Then I found out that not only was there a Consumers Association of Canada but there was also a consumers association of each province. During the visits of this committee the main witnesses in each case were members of these provincial associations.

We started in Winnipeg and the president of the Consumers Association of Manitoba appeared before us with a very high-sounding brief which promised to cure all the ills of this country from A to Z. But then some of the members of the committee, including myself, began to question this lady as to who constituted the Consumers Association of Manitoba. She told us their membership was, I think, one or two thousand members and the membership fee was \$1 or \$2. Then I started to question whether this was an association of people who really wanted to do a job to help the consumers of Canada. I do not know what other members of the committee thought, but certainly my view was that these were some busybodies, maybe two or three busybodies, who could not control their husbands, as I said before, and who got together and canvassed every household in Manitoba and finally succeeded in getting a membership of a thousand persons or so in a province which contains nearly one million people.

Hon. Mr. Molson: It would seem that my honourable friend believes in living dangerously.

Hon. Mr. Thorvaldson: Then we stopped at Regina and found an identical situation there. The Consumers Association of Saskatchewan was made up of a group of people of whom someone became president, and others occupied themselves as officers. I think I recall that the total membership was less than 2,000 persons for the whole province of Saskatchewan.

This, honourable senators, is the background to one thing I want to say about this legislation. This bill is here simply because the Consumers Association of Canada, and the provincial associations, wanted the Government to do something about a certain problem. Now what is the problem? The problem is, of course, entirely one for the provinces within the Constitution of Canada, and the only way in which this Parliament can legislate with regard to the problem is on the basis of this old fiction of which we are all aware where we bring in the criminal law

under which the federal Government is enabled to legislate in these matters. It is quite appropriate, quite proper. Canada has jurisdiction to make this legislation part of the criminal law and, as a result, we have this Act. However, all it does is cost this country a great deal of money.

Dr. Crawford, the Deputy Minister (National Health), testified at one of our committee meetings when we were talking about ice balls that had been imported from China two or three years ago.

Hon. Mr. Carter: From Hong Kong.

Hon. Mr. Thorvaldson: Yes. It was discovered that they contained a very harmful substance. The fact of the matter was, of course, that the federal Government was not able to deal with the problem, but, as Dr. Crawford said, the federal department simply got in touch with the provincial departments of health, by telephone and telegram, and the problem became solved. How was it solved? Simply by the provincial departments of health telling the individuals handling these Hong Kong ice balls that they were dangerous to health, and appealing to them to take them off their shelves and destroy them. That was done, and done quite easily. Dr. Crawford did say that it took a little time to put the message across to these provincial departments of health, but here was a situation which was rectified quite properly and easily, simply because people are decent, and because merchants and druggists throughout Canada, the moment they learn they have something on their shelves which is either poisonous or deleterious to the health of the public of Canada, do not need inspectors to go in and arrest them or charge them with offences for which they are liable to a fine of a thousand dollars or six months in jail. That is not necessary in regard to these matters. The remedy was a voluntary act of responsible people.

That is why I say that this bill is simply an invention of the Consumers Association of Canada, which is so powerful with certain bodies in this Government that they get whatever they want—and they got this bill. I hope they are happy with it.

However, let me pose this question: What will the administration of this act cost Canada? I do not know, but I would say perhaps \$1 million a year, maybe \$3 million in a couple of years' time when they get these inspectors going all over the country, entering drug stores and manufacturing establishments,