

*Proposed Consumers Affairs Department*

the attention of federal departments is directed in this way. I am not suggesting, however, that this is any substitute for the kind of tribunal, if you like, or semi-autonomous organization which could assume its own direction and assume responsibility for having a general regard for consumer affairs.

I agree, Mr. Speaker, that there has been a general concern in Canada about consumer matters. We in Ontario have just had the benefit of the final report of a select committee of the Ontario legislature on consumer credit. The province of Manitoba over the past three or four years has been giving very close scrutiny to those aspects of its public law which affect consumers and business practices generally. The province of Nova Scotia has already carried out one of these studies and has received a report. This in turn is just a reflection of the concern of the elected representatives, a concern in turn communicated to them by their constituents that there should be a fresh look by government at the problems of consumer matters.

Perhaps I could close on a final, historical note. It is of interest to observe paragraph 892 of the Molony report:

Consumer protection is no new idea. The intervention by the state to restrain deceitful trading practices and promote honourable standards in commerce has a long history.

The Molony report goes on to quote a twelfth century example. It, therefore, is not a novel proposition we are putting forward. What we are really talking about today is not a general principle, that is, whether there should be intervention by the state to protect individual consumers; we are not here considering whether or not the maxim *caveat emptor* is now to be replaced with a new philosophy. We have already accepted the philosophy of state intervention to protect consumers. We are really talking about the formal organization to carry out those principles.

**Mr. H. C. Harley (Halton):** Mr. Speaker, I do want to make a few remarks at this time but I shall be brief. I really want to deal with another aspect of the matter which has not been discussed here. I should like to deal with the health point of view rather than the economics of the situation which seem to have taken the time of most members of the

house. I noticed that in the brief presented by the Consumers Association of Canada there is reference to the fact that the main function of such a group would be safeguarding the economic tradition of consumers.

I only have one minute left so I will restrain myself to the discussion of one point, namely, labelling. During the last session of parliament a special committee on food and drugs went into this question, particularly the marking of insecticides, pesticides and drugs. One problem that has cropped up now has been the labelling of foods. We hear a great deal from people who suffer from allergies and who have to be on special diets, such as egg-free diets, gluten-free diets and sugar-free diets for diabetics. A great deal of material is being circulated to the end that such people will receive some assurance that the label on every food product will indicate the content of that product. I believe everyone in this house would agree with that principle.

I am pleased to see that the bakery products business, as the result of a voluntary approach by the food and drug directorate, is now labelling at least 50 per cent of the products now on the market by listing the total ingredients.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret):** Order. The hour for private members' business has now expired.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Bell (Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, in the highly unusual circumstance of no minister being in the house to announce the business, I wonder which parliamentary secretary—I hope the most attractive one—will be announcing the business for tomorrow?

**Mr. Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, I should be glad to defer to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare but that the business I have to announce is mundane. Yesterday, as recorded at page 5489 of *Hansard*, the Minister of National Revenue set forth the program of business for today. It is the proposal of the government house leader, I understand, that we should continue this program of business tomorrow.

At six o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.