

Food and Drugs Act

share of the tax burden. This legislation creates a situation in which they will be able to find even more tax loopholes in future. We do express some concern over that and look forward to the committee hearings. People who are in favour of banking centres in these cities will have a chance to express their beliefs and those who have concerns will also have the opportunity to do so. As well, representatives from cities that are not included in this special tax regime will also have a chance to make their proposals and express their concerns.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The question is as follows: Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre), seconded by Mr. Hockin, moved that Bill C-64, an Act to amend the Income Tax Act, a related Act, the Canada Pension Plan and the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971, be read the second time and, by unanimous consent, referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time, and by unanimous consent, referred to Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

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[English]

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare) moved that Bill S-6, an Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, be read the second time and, by unanimous consent, referred to Committee of the Whole.

He said: Madam Speaker, at the outset, I want to thank my counterparts for their co-operation on Bill S-6. I will be very brief today.

This Bill is an Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act. It has gone through the Senate. The problem first arose some time ago. Back in 1977, Labatt's Breweries of Canada developed a new beer product called Labatt's Special Light containing 4 per cent alcohol. At that time, it was the view of the officials of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs that the

product was labelled, packaged, sold and advertised in such a manner that it was likely to be mistaken for light beer for which the maximum alcohol content was set at 2.5 per cent by legislation.

That matter went through the various stages of the court system and eventually went all the way to the Supreme Court. It became known as the light beer decision of the Supreme Court. With my reputation for being opposed to tobacco, impaired driving and drugs, I am pleased today to be on the other side and to do something for those who want to drink Labatt's Special Light and other such substances.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): To make a long story very short, the court ruled that certain Sections of the Food and Drugs Act were *ultra vires*. For this whole period of time, this matter has been before us. Canadian manufacturers, breweries and consumer groups have all been abiding by a system known as the food recipe system. On the other hand it has not allowed us to force it, for example, on imports.

• (1930)

These changes would allow us to remove the uncertainty in the private sector over the status of federal food products standards. They will permit amendments which reflect new technology and facilitate the handling of our international obligations in this area. It will put us back into the stream where we have usually been and allow us to protect both Canadian consumers and manufacturers.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I had about a three-hour speech prepared. However, in the interests of time and in the interests of guests who I have here from Florida, Mark Garcia, his wife Barbara and their daughter Mandy, I will cut this very short.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Copps: I concur with the Minister in that we hope this Bill will address certain concerns expressed through the Supreme Court decision. I only ask that the Government and whoever develops these Bills to please try in the future to make the wording a little cleaner and crisper. Just for the record, I would like to read Clause 1 of the Bill into the record to let people know how hard it is sometimes to follow government rules because we cannot even understand them. I was reading this and trying to figure out what it meant. It says in part:

(2) Paragraphs (1)(b) and (c) do not apply to an operator of a conveyance that is used to carry an article or to a carrier of an article whose sole concern, in respect of the article, is the conveyance of the article unless the operator or carrier could, with reasonable diligence, have ascertained that the conveying or receiving for conveyance of the article or the possession of the article or the possession of the article for the purpose of conveyance would be in violation of subsection (1).

You can understand why the average taxpayer gets confused. Nonetheless, the substance of the Bill is supportable and we will support it.