

Private Members' Business

These objectives are important to the government. The regulatory authority of the Food and Drugs Act and medical devices regulations is comprehensive in ensuring that these vital objectives are fulfilled.

Under the authority of the medical devices regulations a notice of compliance is required from the Department of National Health and Welfare prior to the sale of any new breast prostheses in Canada.

The issuance of a notice of compliance signifies that the department has received sufficient clinical and physical testing data to be satisfied that the medical device being reviewed does not pose an unacceptable risk to health.

The requirements contained in the regulations under the authority of the Food and Drugs Act ensure that the meaningful objectives of the hon. member's bill are achieved.

It is important to point out once again that no medical device is free of risk. The Department of National Health and Welfare reviews and assesses the data respecting the safety and effectiveness of implantable medical devices such as breast prostheses prior to their sale to ensure that unsafe and ineffective devices are not sold in Canada.

The second objective of the proposed bill concerns the banning of breast prostheses which contain dangerous properties including specified prohibited substances or are prescribed under regulations at a later date. This is not a new provision when considering the authority of the current Food and Drugs Act.

Section 19 of the Food and Drugs Act clearly prohibits the sale of any medical device that when used according to directions or under such conditions as are customary or usual may cause injury to the health of the purchaser or user.

The hon. member's proposal does not allow for risks and benefits to be considered and assessed. Instead the proposal requires that implants be banned entirely.

The Department of National Health and Welfare undertakes a scientific risk assessment approach when considering the safety and effectiveness of medical devices. This approach enables the department to assess fully the health risk by a substance present in a medical device. If a medical device poses an unacceptable health

risk which may cause injury to the health of the purchaser or user, it is prohibited.

In closing, I hope that I have illustrated that the regulatory provisions currently provided in the Food and Drugs Act and medical devices regulations are comprehensive in addressing the safety and effectiveness of all medical devices including breast prostheses.

The concepts proposed by the hon. member through Bill C-279 are considered to be vitally important, but breast prostheses—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired. The hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I was looking forward to rising and having a very factful and important debate on the subject of breast implants. I was looking forward to it a great deal. I expected that I could put forward some information that would be useful to the discussion and that would in fact help the government.

However, I have heard the hon. member for Winnipeg South, after two or three years of the opposition raising this question in the House of Commons, sanctimoniously say the legislation is adequate and sanctimoniously provide us with words like this is there to take care of any company that brings forward a product in a false, deceptive way, whose competition and merit and safety, et cetera are in question.

We have given two years of evidence in this House that this implant is not safe, that all implants are not safe. We have given indication after indication. We have met with the minister. We have provided him with documentation. We have had doctors in addition to Pierre Blais, who the government up and fired. We have provided documentation to the minister. In fact, what happens? Unsafe and ineffective medical devices, which this hon. member for Winnipeg South says will not be on the market and there are provisions to ensure they will not be on the market and are still on the market.

Do not be mistaken. We do not have a ban on implants in Canada. We have a voluntary moratorium on the use of implants. The day before the report was tabled with the food and drug administration calling for a ban on silicone implants except for reconstructive purposes, we had plastic surgeons in Quebec holding a press conference telling Canadian women breast implants were safe.