

referred to committee or, shall I say, perhaps it was supported to death.

I am hoping for the reasons I will set out in the very brief moments at my disposal that there will be a disposition on the part of the House at this time to allow the bill to go before the committee, not because of any desire on my part to pre-empt the government's responsibility here because I recognize this is an area which is within the government's responsibility. As a matter of fact, I know that the government is interested in this bill.

Since the bill was first introduced, there has been considerable interest all across the country. As a result of the debate in this House and the debate that was generated across the country, a number of groups have become very active in support of the principle of the bill. Indeed, I think it is fair to say that as a result of the bill, which has served as a catalyst for this problem of growing concern, the Canadian Association of Advertisers and the Canadian Association of Broadcasters in the fall of 1971 introduced their code of conduct governing advertising directed at children.

This code became effective January 1, 1972. I am hoping the code will be one area that can be discussed at greater length and in greater depth if the bill is permitted to go before the committee. Indeed, the people responsible for the code can be called upon to give evidence. I think it is fair to say that the code has not proven to be successful. In the first instance, it is a voluntary code. This means the organization sponsoring that code has to depend upon the goodwill of the participating stations to see that the regulations are enforced. The monitoring that has gone on from time to time indicates that the code has not been observed, generally speaking, right across the country. Of course, the principal breaches of the code take place around Christmas time.

Following the introduction of the code, the Quebec government introduced regulations under their consumer protection act. The regulations were designed to protect, within the limited jurisdiction of the province of Quebec, children in that province from advertising emanating within that province. The regulation forbids advertising which incites children to buy or incites them to incite others to buy the product. That is the essential regulation. There are others which also govern the kind of advertising that can be directed toward children. I know there is great interest on the part of the Quebec government to have national legislation in this area because of their limited jurisdiction.

I am also aware that the Canadian Radio and Television Commission, under the distinguished chairmanship of Mr. Juneau, has been conducting studies into this and has been monitoring radio and television stations across the country from time to time. If the bill is permitted to go to the committee, I would expect that the chairman of the CRTC and some of his officials would be called as witnesses. They would be able to tell us exactly what they have found as a result of their studies.

In addition, there are studies underway at the present time at several Canadian universities, including the University of Montreal, McGill University and the University of Toronto. I also understand there are studies underway at Trent University. The United States has been ahead of

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us in this area, not in the issuing of regulations, but in the emergence of concerned groups reacting to the situation. There is an organization in Boston called Action for Children's Television which was successful in obtaining hearings before the Federal Communications Commission. These hearings are now a matter of public record and could be useful material for the committee to study if this bill is referred to the committee. Then, there are the concerned parents' groups which have been started in a number of cities across Canada, here in Ottawa, in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and others.

• (1710)

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take the time of the House for much longer because I should like to hear from other hon. members. I have already made my views known. I spoke in the debate which took place when the bill was first introduced in April of 1971. Perhaps I could close my brief remarks by saying that historically we protect children. Under the law they receive special protection. Child labour laws recognize the vulnerability of children. There are laws which prohibit children entering into contracts. But the law does not afford protection to children who are the targets of high pressure, subtle television techniques. Statistics Canada made a survey last year which indicated that Canadian children are exposed to more than 20 hours of television every week. These programs contain many high-pressure commercial messages which in many instances distort the child's view of the real world, make the child cynical about what is going on around him and which build up expectations which, very often because of financial circumstances, cannot possibly be fulfilled. Consequently, serious damage is done to the child-parent relationship. I say this with some feeling because I am the father of six children ranging in age from six to 12.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Even the advertizing industry itself is concerned. I will conclude my remarks by quoting from the Vice-Chairman of one of the largest advertizing agencies in the world—John Burghardt of Young and Rubican:

We advertizers speak to 3, 7 and 12-year olds with the same subtle seductive techniques used in selling to adults. We use warmth and emotion, surprise and excitement, humor and suspense, to create images and auras which have little or nothing to do with the products concerned.

I can put it in no better way than the advertizing people have put it themselves in this quotation. I do hope the House will be disposed to allow this bill to go to committee because there is a large body of evidence to support my contention that children are not a proper target for commercial advertizing. Certainly, there is a case for much stronger regulation to be made to protect our children from these subtle advertizing techniques.

Mr. B. Keith Penner (Thunder Bay): Mr. Speaker, it is a pity we have to be so brief in speaking to this important bill, but if the House will permit the bill, or even the subject matter of the bill, to go before a committee there will be much more opportunity for a good deal to be said, as well as much to be heard with regard to a matter which