

has happened in the United States with what has not happened here in Canada.

Incidentally, it has been reported to me that an enterprising promoter in this city cleaned up \$60,000 this fall, after the August 31 deadline—which the producers wanted extended—buying cyclamates at distress prices from Ottawa supermarkets and reselling them to—would you believe it—the three Ottawa hospitals. Cyclamates are still on the market, inadequately labelled, not marked as dangerous and available without prescription for anyone to buy. I have some here to prove it.

In conclusion, there are some interesting questions which we should consider. First, how are we in future to be sure that tablets, liquids and powders available as non-prescription drugs to meet the special needs of people such as diabetics will be diluted to the proper strength so as not to be dangerous. Many of those who use these preparations are old people whose eyesight is no longer good. How can we be sure they will get these preparations in the proper strength and not run the risk of taking overdoses of cyclamate?

I am sure the minister's intentions were beyond question, but he goofed. I have no hesitancy in saying he will goof again if he fails to develop a proper mechanism and policy for dealing with additives.

Mr. Gaston Isabelle (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to comment on the proposal that the government should compensate food manufacturers for losses sustained when the use of cyclamates in food was banned, but before doing so I would like to give a short summary of the action taken by the government in regard to this matter.

The few hon. members left in the House will recall that on October 21, 1969, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) announced that while no evidence existed to suggest that the use of cyclamates caused cancer in humans, the feeding of high levels of cyclamates to rats produced bladder tumours. After consultation with his scientific advisers, the minister decided

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to phase out the use of cyclamates as an artificial sweetener in foods. This was achieved over a period of approximately a year. Dietetic canned fruits containing cyclamates, the last class of foods to be removed from the market, were permitted to be sold until September 1, 1970. In making this decision the minister was faced with a potential hazard to the health of the Canadian people. It was therefore necessary to take this action for the protection of the public health. I think all hon. member will agree that health considerations must take precedence over economic factors.

I should like to point out that no food manufacturer is required to use a specific food additive in this product. That decision must be made by the food manufacturer taking all factors into consideration, including the possible risk that the food additive might be subsequently considered hazardous in view of additional scientific data. The government considers this to be a normal business risk faced by any manufacturer.

● (10:20 p.m.)

In summary, the following factors must be considered. Firstly, the decision to phase-out the use of cyclamates in foods was taken to protect the Canadian public from a potential health hazard. Under such circumstances, health considerations must take precedence over economic factors. Secondly, food manufacturers were not required to use cyclamates in their products. Under these circumstances, and after careful consideration, the government has decided that the food industry cannot be compensated for losses incurred owing to the withdrawal of cyclamates from food use.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware whether my intervention has served any useful purpose tonight, but I am under the impression that we are witnessing a complete breakdown of our parliamentary system as a result of tonight's exercise in futility, a late show which is sheer madness. I hope a stop will soon be put to this.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.24 p.m.