

Before I describe WHMIS to the House, let me talk briefly about the process of consultation and consensus which produced this legislation.

WHMIS is a real product of consensus. It is the result of over four years of extensive consultation among industry, organized labour, and federal, provincial and territorial Governments. The Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association have all been key non-government parties to the WHMIS consensus. The provinces, the territories, and the federal Government also agree on WHMIS. They feel the program is needed, and they will co-operate in implementing it.

The co-operation which went into designing WHMIS and the strong and enthusiastic support for WHMIS among all consulting parties are unprecedented. The program is unique because all participants, each representing a different interest, support the proposal.

It is unique. It is the first time in Canadian history that this type of consensus or this type of tripartite agreement has been reached. We think it is yet another example of the Government's commitment to the consultative process and demonstrates that this commitment can work; we can bring about a consensus in the country if we work at it.

[*Translation*]

As for WHMIS, Mr. Speaker, the program provides a national, standard source of information designed to protect Canadian workers by providing both employees and employers with the necessary information on hazardous chemical products used in the workplace.

WHMIS will ensure that manufacturers, suppliers and importers provide information on hazardous materials. It will also make it possible to transmit that information to employers, who in turn will pass it on to the employees who use the materials in the workplace.

[*English*]

To be effective, a workplace hazardous materials information system must be comprehensive. It must be applied consistently in workplaces across Canada.

It would make little sense to require hazardous products information in one jurisdiction and not in another. The purpose is to make a uniform, national system by consensus. Of course this requires the co-operation of all federal, provincial, and territorial Governments. All these jurisdictions have existing occupational safety and health programs. WHMIS would work through these safety instruments to implement uniformly a national program in all 13 Canadian jurisdictions.

Even though WHMIS is essentially an occupational safety and health initiative, Governments, business, and labour agree that the present federal Hazardous Products Act is the best existing statute in which to establish the core requirements for WHMIS. This is because WHMIS will deal with standards

*Hazardous Materials Information Review Act*

and disclosure requirements for hazardous products at the point of sale or importation.

The Bill before the House would deliver the federal portion of WHMIS and would enable the program to be implemented efficiently through the existing occupational safety and health programs of the jurisdictions concerned. This will avoid needless duplication, make for smoother administration, and enable WHMIS to be a leaner, more efficient program.

Altogether, the proposed Bill contains modifications to the Hazardous Products Act and to Part IV of the Canada Labour Code. It would also establish new provisions to protect legitimate confidential information.

The Hazardous Products Act amendments will serve as a national regulatory foundation for WHMIS. WHMIS will identify hazardous materials and require information about them in the workplace. It will set up a cautionary labelling system for containers of hazardous materials and require the disclosure of even more information through material safety data sheets including the identify of hazardous ingredients. Manufacturers and importers of such material would have to provide this information as a condition of sale and importation.

WHMIS will establish a supplementary ingredient disclosure list, containing the names of additional substances which must be declared on material safety data sheets. It will establish a maximum fine for an indictable offence of \$1 million for violation of the Hazardous Products Act and increase the fine on summary conviction from \$1,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. It will set up a mechanism to protect sensitive confidential business information. It will require suppliers to provide information, in confidence, to treating medical professionals during emergencies. The Bill also provides for consultation with the provinces, Territories, industry and labour prior to changes in the WHMIS regulations or schedules in the revised Hazardous Products Act.

• (2100)

Amendments to the Canada Labour Code Part IV are an important part of the WHMIS legislation. These will extend the protection of the WHMIS proprietary information mechanism to federally regulated employers. All other authorities to implement WHMIS, including requirements for worker education programs, are currently contained in the Canada Labour Code Part IV.

[*Translation*]

The revised occupational health and safety regulations will include WHMIS requirements for federally regulated employers. These requirements will be enforced in accordance with similar provincial and territorial legislation. The purpose of WHMIS, Mr. Speaker, is to protect workers, and this means that education programs for workers are an important part of the system.