

*Patent Act—Trade Marks Act*

remain a little sceptical, because science is not far enough advanced in this field to give any weight to such advertising claims.

Yet, some of those products are still to be found on the market.

So, taking all this into account, the quality of the product must be such, and it must be guaranteed in such a way, that one can be sure, beyond a doubt, that it will not endanger one's health, one's life. The manufacturer or the licence holder must be so conscious of this, that the thalidomide tragedy for instance, of a few years ago, cannot be repeated.

It is obvious that the regulations must be strict, specific, so that such disastrous situations can be avoided. That is the purpose of the amendment.

The act says that the licences will be revoked but I feel that this is not specific enough. Even if certain business concerns were taken to court—we know about those delays which unfortunately are ever increasing in length—it can happen that in the meantime those who violated the regulations continue to sell their products. Will they cease to distribute and advertise them?

That is one more reason why the act should be more specific. When a product has been shelved because it is dangerous, those who sell it, under a patent, will lose their licences. If that were stated in so many words in the act I feel that the people would be better protected.

**Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the minister for dealing again with the same subject which remains in our opinion very important namely pharmaceutical drugs and according to the same legislation, foodstuffs.

At the present time, the public is under the impression that anyone can very easily get a license allowing him to manufacture anything and that none of these products are controlled on the market. Therefore, people are afraid because accidents have happened.

A few years ago, in my riding, a child died because he had swallowed soap. At the present time, no provision in the legislation obliges the companies to mention on the labels that the consumption of a certain quantity of soap can kill a child.

The minister had performed a tremendous task in this field because today so-called pills and drugs are manufactured.

Bottles are filled with water, colouring is added, the product is put on the market and

[Mr. Matte.]

the public is fooled. Why? Because consumers are not protected and the legislation is not specific enough.

I heard the hon. member for Champlain say that certain products were damaging for the scalp, and that is true. However, some products are very good for the scalp while others are toxic. There are chemical products and natural products. In the present legislation no provision obliges the manufacturer of toxic products to identify them as such by saying to what extent they could be good or bad for people.

However, natural products have been holding good in England since 1886. If a person has white hair for instance, by the simple virtue of nature, his hair will regain its original colour and the products are unadulterated. In the case of a person who had dark hair when he was young, his hair will become dark again.

On the other hand, there are other products on the market that are supposed to change hair colouring but they are harmful and lead to falling hair, broken hair and dry hair. For instance some beauty products such as hair sprays harm women's scalp. Others, however, are efficient and do have the qualities advertised in their case. But there is no provision in the present legislation to protect the consumer. Good as well as bad products are sold indiscriminately on the market. The advertising pattern tends to make bad products sell more easily than good ones.

We would like the minister to tell us what he intends to do in the case of the recommendations included in the consumer charter he has just talked about, instead of merely telling us he has been studying the problem for months, as he was the co-chairman of the committee concerned. Receiving briefs is not all that matters; the recommendations they contain have to be put into practice.

If we have created a Department of Consumer Affairs, it is time, I think, to implement these important recommendations. This is why, I believe, the hon. Minister told us that he was very favourable to the amendments which we have introduced since last night. He studied them seriously and they will certainly be written into the statutes.

Unfortunately, there have been in the past, in the pharmaceutical field, scandals about products which had reportedly caused death or disabilities. However, we are still facing the same problem. Will the minister wait much longer still before putting these recommendations into practice? We do not want to