

are a lot more than that who can be protected by this measure—then let's do it.

[*Translation*]

So, Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues, Hon. Members on both sides of this House, to let this Bill go forward, to let it be studied by a Parliamentary Committee so that it can be considered in detail and that a final version can be passed, after certain amendments are made.

[*English*]

I trust that my colleagues on all sides of the House will cooperate, send this Bill to a parliamentary committee and ensure that it is adopted for the benefit of many, many Canadians.

I said moments ago that there were something like 4,000 signatures here. That was an understatement, I am afraid. I am told that the actual number of Canadians who have signed these petitions is 20,000. I ask my colleagues to bear that in mind, and I ask for the co-operation of all Members of the House.

**Mr. George Minaker (Winnipeg—St. James):** Madam Speaker, I recognize that this is the final hour of a long, extended week of work in the House of Commons. It is the first opportunity that I have had to speak while you have been in the chair, so I hope that you will find the comments and the subject interesting until the final hour is reached.

I would like to comment on Bill C-289, an Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, which has been introduced by the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps). Bill C-289 is concerned with the problems of Canadians who unknowingly consume restaurant foods containing ingredients to which they are allergic. The Bill before the House would require all restaurants to make available to the public a list, in French and English, of all ingredients used in the food that they sell. The Bill would also require every restaurant chain and every branch restaurant, or any food services facility—

**Mr. Boudria:** That is not what it says. It says either language, not both.

**Mr. Minaker:**—in either language. I would think, because of the seriousness of this, that this would be in both languages because of our country and the travelling of citizens across our country.

It would require that all restaurants or services would provide a packaging, a list of the ingredients used in the food that they sell. Bill C-289 seeks to deal with a problem that has become acute in Canada. Many people suffer allergic reactions to food and food products or ingredients within food. Tragically, some even die from severe allergic reactions to the food that they eat.

I might point out that the CBC has reported that some 24 Canadians have died from allergic reactions to food eaten in restaurants during the past two years. The Hon. Member for

### *Food and Drugs Act*

Hamilton East has identified a very real problem and should be thanked for bringing it to the attention of the House of Commons for debate so that we can get opinions and the public attention to this problem that exists not only in this country but in all parts of the world.

• (1420)

As I have indicated, many Canadians are at risk because of food allergies. The numbers have been estimated in the tens of thousands, although it is very difficult to say with certainty just how many Canadians suffer from this problem. However, by being extremely careful when shopping and cooking, these Canadians can be reasonably sure of controlling what they eat at home and can, therefore, dine at home with some security.

I attended a restaurant equipment show in Las Vegas in 1975 where it was stated that in the United States two of every five meals consumed by the average American were consumed in restaurants or otherwise out of their own home. I would think that by now in Canada at least half of the meals of the average Canadian are consumed outside of the home. This increases the threat to people who may suffer from allergies without necessarily being aware of it.

I can understand that it is very difficult for restaurants to guarantee all the ingredients they include in their foods. As the Hon. Member for Dauphin—Swan River (Mr. White) indicated earlier, there are many ways that that could fall asunder when people have come to feel fully confident that the list on the wall contains all the ingredients in a meal.

This is a very complex situation. A person may be allergic to the flour in a particular sauce on a meal without being aware of it because the ingredients of the flour had not been listed. To what degree would restaurants be responsible for identifying all the ingredients in the foods they serve?

Without particular reference to the subject, I would like to commend the Searle drug company which announced last week that all of the non-medical ingredients in the products it sells will be identified. This is a step in the right direction. Some of the drug companies are doing this on their own. I foresee that companies supplying food will also do this voluntarily for the public interest. Discussions are now taking place between the Department of Health and suppliers of food, preservatives, and ingredients.

This is a very complex problem, and I would not want this Bill to be passed in its present form. While it attempts to deal with this problem, I do not believe it goes far enough. They have not studied all the implications which would result if this Bill did become law. However, I very strongly support continued discussions with the proper authorities and the bringing forward of a proper Bill to the House of Commons as quickly as possible to try to cover all the areas which I believe this Bill has not covered.

I commend the Member for Hamilton Copps) for bringing forward this first initiative through a Private Members' Bill in