

*Hazardous Substances*

**Mr. Keith Hymmen (Kitchener):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak briefly on this bill and to support the minister. May I congratulate him on his creditable performance and the leadership he has given since he assumed his portfolio last summer.

This bill, as hon. members are aware, is very similar to Bill S-22 which was previously introduced in the other place, passed there and placed on our order paper, but which with the prorogation of the 27th parliament died on the order paper. We are making progress in this house, though I am not suggesting that we ought to have more elections or prorogations.

I should like to recall a rather amusing book with the title "Mr. Blandings builds his Dream House". According to the book, the only way to build a perfect house was to build one, tear it down and then build another. In the same way, the reconsideration of this bill makes for refinement. As a result, I feel that Bill S-26 is better legislation than was Bill S-22. At the time Bill S-22 was introduced, there was no active Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs headed by the present minister. Aside from the subsequent hazard of substance, the other bill also dealt with another matter, the question of the advertising and sale of contraceptive devices. This part of the legislation should be under the jurisdiction of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

● (8:50 p.m.)

We have had a very commendable record in this country in ensuring purity and safety of food and drugs under our Food and Drug Directorate. However, there have been a great many products, and new products are arriving daily on the market, which cannot be classified as either food or drugs but at the same time are very important in the every day life of the consumer. In this respect, the legislation currently being introduced by the minister, covers matters that are important to the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In the eyes of the consumer, we have been far behind our neighbours to the south and other countries of the world in providing legislation for the protection of the consumer.

I would like to refer, Mr. Speaker, to one particular section of this bill, namely the one covering poisons. Of 11,000 fatal accidents recorded for the year 1966, a little over 2,000 occurred in the home. I will not go into the details. As an hon. member previously mentioned, 275 of these resulted from poisoning.

[Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway).]

With 20 million people in our country, 275 is not a large number, but this bill will be important if even only one life is saved. There were actually over 400 accidental poisonings in the year 1966, 30 per cent of which occurred outside the home.

I would refer to the statistical evidence on poisoning accidents, every one of which could be a fatal accident. This evidence indicates 70 per cent of these accidents involved children under the age of five years. The very high incidence of drug and non-drug poisoning involving very young children points out the urgent necessity for control in this area. It is impossible to prevent every poisoning, but what is required is more awareness by parents and the general public; better labelling, improved packaging and other safety measures in order to reduce accidents to both adults and children and the potential serious injury or loss of life.

Schedule 1 of the bill is very specific. Schedule 2 is rather general in character covering many household cleaners, bleaches and solvents presently used in the home. There are many other hazardous substances in addition to the ones specified. We cannot, of course, know in advance what products will arrive on the market in the future or to what extent they will be hazardous. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) or his colleague the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) must be in a position to act by order in council to add or delete possible classes in schedule 1 and provide reasonable controls for the type of product included in schedule 2, subject of course to the other provisions of the legislation. I am very pleased to support this bill, Mr. Speaker, which is an important step forward in protection of the Canadian people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. I must inform the house if the hon. minister speaks now, he will close the debate.

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** My first words, Mr. Speaker, must be of apology to the house for being absent when this bill was called for second reading this afternoon. Apparently, because of the new rules passed before Christmas, business is being dealt with very expeditiously in this house. I apologize for not being present.

I had the advantage of listening this afternoon and part of this evening to the debate, a debate which indicates that there is support