

Broadcasting Act

professional life or in business do not watch enough, do not have as much interest in television programs. But to learn that the average child watches some 20 hours a week of television is a startling revelation. That means the child is spending almost as much time watching television as he spends at school, and the learning impact may be as great as at school because the child is in comfortable surroundings when watching television.

Many of us find the idea especially repulsive that advertisers beam their messages at the child and the child in turn puts pressure on the parents. Many adults develop a certain sales resistance; we automatically turn off a sales pitch if we are conscious of what is happening. But the mother who is raising three or four children may not be conscious that pressure is being put on her, sort of underhandedly, by her children as a result of television advertising. She may be buying goods in a local supermarket and the children will suggest that she buy certain items which they have seen advertised. As I say, she is not conscious of the sales pitch and may be pressured into buying things that are not necessary for the family. Perhaps they may even be beyond the family budget. They may be food items that are not particularly nutritious. In this connection I would like to read one paragraph from "One Child, One Chance," a report on nutrition published by the National Council of Welfare. At page 5 it reads:

With the pervasiveness of television and other forms of advertising, the question of nutrition has taken on a new wrinkle. Today everyone, rich and poor, is getting food and nutrition information almost exclusively from high powered mass media advertising—television in particular. And much of that information is misleading. Snack foods and soda pops, sugar-coated cereals and processed foods do not add up to optimal nutrition. For the housewife, wanting to get greater food value for her food dollars, and particularly for the poor who need to get the greatest possible food value for the fewest food dollars, the lack of readily accessible, easily understood nutrition information represents a serious public disservice.

Children are being pressured to buy food which is not necessarily nutritious, and this pressure is being transferred to the parents. Another matter which is of concern is that parents are being pressured to buy food, toys and other products which are beyond the financial resources of the family.

The hon. member's bill puts forward a solution to this problem. I would like a parliamentary committee to go into greater detail on the exact implementation of such measures, whether through this bill or by some other means, to control television advertising to children. So, Mr. Speaker, I support the proposal that the subject matter of the bill be sent to committee for study, because I believe it has great merit.

Mr. Reid: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the government would have no objection to the subject matter of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts at the conclusion of this private members' hour. If there were agreement among hon. members to discharge the bill and to send the subject matter to that committee, we would certainly be prepared to go along with it.

Mr. McGrath: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the suggestion of the parliamentary secretary, although the bill is so simple and straightforward

[Mr. Foster.]

that I fail to understand why it itself cannot be referred to committee. But under the circumstances, if there is a disposition to send the subject matter to committee, half a loaf is better than none and I thank the parliamentary secretary for his suggestion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): The parliamentary secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Reid), seconded by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Lundrigan), moves that this bill be not now read a second time, but that the subject matter thereof be sent to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): The hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business having expired. I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

[English]

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**OLD AGE SECURITY ACT****AMENDMENTS TO INCREASE BASIC PENSION AND TO CLARIFY BASE YEAR IN ESCALATION FORMULA**

The House resumed consideration of the following order:

Report stage of Bill C-147, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act, as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. When the House went into private members' hour at five o'clock, a point of order had been raised and the Chair was considering a decision on the motions of hon. members.

[Translation]

I would like to know whether hon. members have completed their arguments on this point of order and on the ruling the Chair should render in connection with the five notices of motion now before us.

The hon. member for Lotbinière has the floor.

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon before five o'clock, I presented some arguments which I hope underlay the admissibility of the five notices of motion submitted by my colleagues and myself to amend Bill C-147, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act.