

discussions through the usual channels, and I believe there is general agreement among all parties to reinstate this evidence, with the same reservation that was expressed by the hon. member for Peace River respecting Bill C-176, that is, that in reinstating the evidence we do not in any way prejudice the right of the committee to call witnesses and to take whatever additional evidence they feel is necessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The minister has indicated that there is consent to reinstate the evidence heard by the committee during the last session, with the reservation the minister has mentioned. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

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CONSUMER PACKAGING AND LABELLING ACT

PROVISIONS RESPECTING PROHIBITIONS, LABELS,
STANDARDIZATION, INSPECTION, ETC.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) moved that Bill C-180, respecting the packaging, labelling, sale, importation and advertising of pre-packaged and certain other products, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great personal pleasure and some personal pride that I rise to move the second reading of Bill C-180, the consumer packaging and labelling act. In my view this is one of the most important pieces of consumer protection legislation that this new department has introduced to Parliament. In a short time, Mr. Speaker, we have introduced some valuable and important legislation to this Parliament for the protection of the consumer, but so far I think this is undoubtedly the most important.

Earlier in the spring this Parliament passed an amendment to the Bills of Exchange Act, which was the first time an amendment had been made in this important field of consumer credit in some years. I refer to the amendment which became effective on November 1. The main feature of this was that finance companies which discount the promissory notes or bills common in consumer finance or time-payment transactions can no longer claim their right to collect from the purchasers under these time-payment contracts in absolute terms, but their claim against the consumer-purchaser is subject to all the rights and equities for a counterclaim which the purchaser might have against the original vendor. This important amendment in the field of consumer legislation, which received the wide acclaim of this House, came into effect only a few days ago.

Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act

Shortly before passage of that legislation this Parliament approved the Hazardous Products Act which I placed before the House. In my view this is the strongest piece of consumer product safety legislation in the world. As a Canadian I was very proud that with my officials this spring I was asked to go to Vienna to explain the operation of the Hazardous Products Act to the International Organization of Consumers Unions.

The National Commission on Products Safety in the United States, a presidential commission which only wound up its work a few months ago, called upon my officials to go to Chicago to testify in front of that commission as to the operation of the Hazardous Products Act. As a result of this, I understand and hope that the American authorities will adopt the methods we are now using in Canada under this act to label hazardous and dangerous household chemicals.

As hon. members know, the Hazardous Products Act placed an immediate ban on the importation, advertising or selling of a number of highly dangerous consumer products and made provision for prescribing the circumstances and conditions under which a number of other products, hazardous if incorrectly used, could be sold, advertised or imported into Canada. Regulations issued under this act have established a nationwide and consistent system of cautionary labelling for a wide range of household products in everyday use. It is a new system which I think other nations are now becoming interested in, and some of them are likely to adopt consumer products safety legislation.

Thousands of individual household products will be covered by these regulations. In the department we are carrying out active research under the Hazardous Products Act which, over the years, will bring more categories of products under the control of this legislation. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I hope to be able to announce by Thursday or Friday some more regulations that we have passed under this legislation to protect the consumer against unsafe products.

In a somewhat different field, early in 1970 this Parliament passed the Textile Labelling Act. Under its authority there will be mandatory labelling of the content of fibres used in clothing and in household textiles, and this will be combined with the fabric care program which I announced early in September. The two programs of textile labelling and care labelling for textiles will go a long way toward solving problems of consumer bewilderment caused by the multiplicity of textiles available in the modern market.

This evening I take pleasure in bringing in another piece of consumer protection legislation along the same lines but in a different field, Bill C-180, the consumer packaging and labelling bill which I suggest should be read with the bill presently before the Senate, Bill S-5, the weights and measures bill which provides for a complete revision of that act. Bill C-180 is designed to afford greater protection to consumers by way of information on the products they buy. It is also designed to make legislation more relative and meaningful in terms of current protection in the world in which the consumer