

*Private Members' Business*

As a matter of fact, if the hon. member had done her research, she would have considered the fact that in the next 12 months, according to the new act, all fresh fruit and vegetables sold in Canada will require a country of origin declaration. That is the thrust of her bill. Had she looked at that, we would not have had to detain the House for a whole hour on a Private Members' bill that is totally redundant, in effect, because its concerns are being looked after.

The government did not sit back and do nothing, as was often the case in the past. It has taken measures that are strengthening the consumers' concerns with respect to the importation of foodstuffs.

We brought forward—

**Ms. Hunter:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to point out that the hon. member is talking about regulations. The intent of my bill is to place such a measure in the act itself so that the Parliament of Canada would be responsible. The regulations may do that. It is important that consumers be given that protection in the body of the act itself, something with which I think the whole House agrees.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth):** With respect, I should tell the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands that she has had her time during this hour. She is now bringing up a matter for debate.

I will turn again to the hon. member for Portage—Interlake.

**Mr. Holtmann:** Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to enter into a direct debate. I am here to inform Canadians and this House about this bill. Although I think most people will agree it has some credibility in terms of the hon. member's desire to show that she is concerned, and she illustrates that it in the form of a bill, all too often the New Democrats throw everything including the kitchen sink into a private members' bill and hope something gets drawn. Often, they do not do their research. In fact she should have withdrawn this particular piece of legislation. Yet here we are discussing it.

**Ms. Hunter:** So says you!

**Mr. Holtmann:** So says the whole side of this House, because we know that this government has taken very concrete steps and measures that have improved quality controls.

If the hon. member would look at the actions we have taken with respect to some of the chemicals used in this country, she would see that we withdrew Alachlor. This probably was not in the best interests of farmers, but we as a government felt that its withdrawal was necessary to protect consumers. If we are doing it here in Canada, we certainly would not want it to be used anywhere else. We do import goods and products from elsewhere. The Department of Health is very much up on the concerns in these situations.

Under this particular legislation we are looking at trade marking grade names to make Canada's inspection system even more effective and credible. The new act will benefit the consumer by ensuring consistent quality of safe agricultural products.

In the past, the Government of Canada did not have the right to go to foreign countries to look at their processing centres to investigate and to ensure that their products were handled in a correct and hygienic fashion and packaged correctly. Under this act, that is now possible. Consequently, the consumer can be reassured that this government is not sitting on its laurels, but is looking at matters of deeper interest and concern, of which the hon. member obviously was not aware. Had she done a little more investigation as to what the Canada Agricultural Products Act is doing she would have seen that within the next 12 months all fruits and vegetables will be identified by their country of origin. It seems to me that is pretty strong wording. It is a pretty strong commitment by this government. I am sure the member would want to applaud that particular action.

Could it have happened sooner? I suspect that may be a case in point. The fact is that it is moving right along, and I think Canadians ought to know that.

The legislation opens up to us the establishments where products are being prepared. We can now see for ourselves whether the places from where we buy our food abroad meet our manufacturing and sanitation standards.

In fact, this is not just taking place with fruit and vegetables. It is also taking place in the slaughterhouses of South America from where we may be bringing in meat supplies, as well as in the United States and