

Radiation Emitting Devices Act

conditioners in the House of Commons. People cannot work when those air conditioning units are operating. However, I do not think that that is the intent of this Act. It was certainly not the original intent. The intent is to protect people. Cases have been made regarding video terminals. People have argued that they have had a negative effect on pregnancy. There has been no proof of that, but I think we must investigate what are the effects on people.

Personally, I use a computer. I find that it is very tiring on my eyes to use that computer for more than 45 minutes to one hour at a time. There must be some hidden effect of which we are not aware and which we must address. I also feel that there must be an effect on children and that they must be suffering from watching television. Perhaps that should be looked at. Specifically, we should only be looking at electronic devices. Those devices should be monitored and vetted. I agree that they should be labelled and totally checked by analysts, as provided for in the Bill. That is what the Bill should address. It should not address the complaints of some people who are not directly affected. It is the do-gooders who do not like the noise. If we stop the machines, the noise stops but the people will have to stop working, and we cannot afford that today. Therefore, I think it is important that we remove the concept of industrial noise and make this very specifically "noise resulting from new technology in electronics".

● (1540)

There is one other area in the Bill which could be broadened. Possibly stereo systems could be allowed to play only at a certain level. I feel that is an infringement on the rights of the Canadian public. However, I must admit, as an individual, that there are many times when I would be delighted if people were not allowed to turn the noise level of their stereos up so high. I have raised children, so I am very much aware of this problem. I worry about their ears. But I do not believe we can regulate, or should regulate, that noise level.

As I said earlier, we must be careful in this Bill that we do not infringe upon the provincial areas of occupational health, which fall under the Workmen's Compensation Boards in the various provinces across this country, or which fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Labour in the various provinces. I believe we have to be careful that we do not put ourselves in the position of going beyond our purpose.

With respect to the importation of radiation emitting devices, I believe the standards of those products are very important. There are many newly industrialized countries, NICs, which are producing these products with possibly lower standards than we require or are used to. We must ensure, when something is brought into Canada that it is not going to be a new danger to the people of this country. Radiation emitting devices are safe if proper safety standards are built in. But let us be very careful, before they are put on the consumer market or allowed to be sold in this country, that they are thoroughly tested so that ten years from now we do not find that we have problems in the health area because we had allowed these units in.

Labelling and packaging is very important. I notice some of the previous regulations call for signs. However, those signs do not really tell me enough. They do not give me the whole story. There must be warnings. For instance, I am not certain about microwave ovens. No one has satisfied me totally that there is not some radiation being emitted from them. I am concerned about children who are at home and have access to microwave ovens while their parents are at work. I am not satisfied that we have looked at all the ramifications with respect to the danger in the use of those units. I would like to have put in place some defence mechanism so that our health costs will not be affected in the future. If we make sure that there will not be illness resulting from these things, it will have a direct and positive effect on our health costs.

I agree with certain regulations in this Bill. I agree there are certain safety checks we must take. However, in this field, where there is a proliferation of new devices produced over the last few years, we must be very careful to have complete analyses done, and a section should be added to define an analyst as a person designated by the Minister as an analyst under the Act. I do not believe that is stated clearly enough. I believe it must be someone with expertise in the field. I do not feel we can generalize and appoint a friend or acquaintance who happens to be adequate. Perhaps we should work this out with the provinces. It could be that they already have these people in their safety associations.

I would like to talk about manufacturers for a moment. Unfortunately, we do not produce a large amount of electronic equipment in this country. It is predominantly imported. We lost that industry because we did not move as quickly as the Japanese. We must make certain of who the manufacturer is, what the regulations are in the country of manufacture, and that the same standards which are acceptable in the country of origin apply. As well, they should meet the same standards as in the United States, which had these standards in place before us.

I have a great deal more to say on this subject but I do want to see this Bill go through second reading today, and I understand there are two more speakers. However, I want to say that we must be careful that we deal directly with radiation emitting devices and do not broaden the Bill beyond its scope. This is a very specific field with which we must deal. We must not get mixed up with other things, because if we do it will water this Bill down.

Having said that, I thank the House for bearing with me in my few remarks and I look forward to having a further discussion on this subject when we get the Bill to committee.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, this Bill amending the legislation which controls radiation emitting equipment is one which should be adopted whether in its present form or with any amendments. It is not a new idea. This is a Bill which has been updated from time to time as our legislation tries to catch up with new developments in industry.

I wish to speak about two specific points in the Bill and then add one generalization. The two points are, first, the matter of