

A record number of consultations took place to define this national standard. These consultations lasted over four years and required the utmost in co-operation from the federal, provincial and territorial authorities, the industry and the unions.

[English]

Over this period, the tripartite consultation phase of the WHMIS project addressed and resolved complex technical, social and legal issues. A consensus was produced, a genuine consensus with the full and active support of all participants—a truly significant achievement.

The WHMIS proposal contained in Bill C-70 provides for an orderly means of communicating information about hazardous materials from manufacturers, suppliers and importers to employers and employees.

[Translation]

Distributors and importers of hazardous materials will from now on have to provide labels and material safety data sheets at the time when such materials are sold or imported. As for the employers, they will have to ensure that their employees are provided with sufficient information and adequate training programs.

I believe that the WHMIS program is practical, effective and realistic. It will allow Canadian workers to enjoy the protection they deserve. It will also be fair to manufacturers as it will improve the quality and quantity of information on work-related hazardous materials.

What is unique about the WHMIS program is that all the participants, who represent varied interests, have given it their full support. It confirms in practice the commitment of this Government to the consultation process. This is an excellent piece of legislation which will protect Canadian workers in all provinces and territories while reflecting the interests of both the unions and the employers.

It is therefore important that Bill C-70 become part of our statutes.

**Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** Madam Speaker, I too would like to comment briefly on Bill C-70 which sets up WHMIS, the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System. I must confess that my Party was consulted when this Bill was being drafted, a gesture we appreciated. From the outset our Party thought that a measure intended to protect workers against workplace hazardous materials would be a welcome addition to our Canadian legislative arsenal.

We thought the Bill was adequate, but we decided to consult other people to make sure that it would meet with the approval of some of the people or companies that would have to live with it. This is why we got in touch, among others, with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association where we were told they had been consulted about the drafting of this legislation. They said they agreed with it. The same thing goes for the Canadian

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Chemical Producers' Association which, of course, is directly affected by this measure.

We did the same thing with the unions. We called on the Canadian Labour Congress and other union organizations and found out that they too—through their representatives—had been consulted by the Government and were in agreement with the contents of the Bill.

Therefore we on this side of the House agree that this Bill should pass quickly this afternoon. We believe that a Bill which provides for the classification of workplace hazardous products, chemical and others, in accordance with clearly established and desirable standards, we think that certain WHMIS provisions such as labels to warn workers who will be using these products are a necessity and that the material safety data sheets which will also provide additional information are a good idea. We believe that the WHMIS must also be noted for its employee training program.

Finally, since it also contains measures to protect trade secrets by allowing certain exemptions when revealing the contents of certain matters might cause economic damage likely to be detrimental to a company, there will be exemptions to protect the manufacturers of such products. It seems to me this legislation is well balanced and this is why we on this side of the House thought we would facilitate its adoption in the House today. Indeed, Madam Speaker, this is why I resume my seat immediately.

• (1900)

[English]

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on another piece of legislation today. This particular piece of legislation will ensure that there is proper labelling of hazardous goods in the workplace.

As was mentioned by other Members who spoke on second reading of the Bill, in committee, and in the House today, it is the result of a consultative process. It has received the agreement of the major shareholders, if I could use that term—the Canadian Labour Congress, the chemical industry, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and others.

It was an important process. It brought forward legislation which was basically good and met the needs of both labour and management. However, I do not believe that Parliament should be a rubber stamp, regardless of who has been involved in the consultative process.

We took the committee system seriously. We listened to the witnesses who appeared before us. As a result we discovered that a number of amendments could be made to the legislation without destroying the co-operative approach. They were amendments to strengthen the legislation without destroying the consensus.

As a result of the work by members of our caucus and as a result of the agreement on the part of the Government, two very important amendments to the legislation were accepted in