

same . . . most people in blind taste tests cannot tell the difference between various brands of beer. Selling beer really means selling an image, a certain lifestyle, a fantasy if you will . . . Lifestyle is a consumer's mental mosaic of his or her desired activities, interests and opinions, a mosaic that is consistent with the person's needs and values . . . The consumer is then presumed to buy the product which through promotion for the most part reflects the lifestyle he or she wishes to lead."⁴⁶

A number of witnesses expressed concern that the promotion of moderate drinking and a healthful lifestyle in general, whether advocated by government or by industry, is overwhelmed by the amount of product advertising by industry, particularly the lifestyle advertising on prime-time television. The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has taken a strong position for a number of years on the advertising of alcoholic beverages, and particularly on lifestyle advertising. In 1989, the CMA requested the federal government to ban all advertising of alcoholic beverages on radio, television, and in printed material. In 1991, the association requested the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to enforce existing regulations with regard to lifestyle advertising of alcoholic beverages. The regulations are detailed in the "Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages", as shown in Appendix A.

The CMA made the following statements to the Sub-Committee on the matter of beverage alcohol advertising:

" . . . until shown otherwise, we must recognize that there is massive prime-time advertising of alcoholic beverages in society and this must encourage consumption . . .

Education has to start as young as possible and it is very difficult to start educating children in elementary school about the adverse effects of alcohol consumption, and then the same children will see on the hockey broadcasts that alcohol is a great thing to use . . .

The lifestyle commercials, in which everybody is running around partying and having a good time and is very comfortable with alcohol and it seems to be a necessary social event, are directly targeted at introducing young people to the product in general and making them comfortable with it and instilling it as a core part of any social occasion."⁴⁷

The advertising of alcoholic beverages is a very difficult and contentious issue. On the one hand, we live in a market economy and the advertising of products is an accepted part of our economic and social system. On the other hand, governments have the responsibility to enact regulations in the public interest, and the regulation of product advertising is an established role for governments. Government restrictions on the advertising of tobacco products have been challenged by the industry and the issue is currently before the courts. Nevertheless, the Sub-Committee believes that the advertising of alcohol products is an important matter and should be re-examined by the federal government in the context of a national health policy.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 8

The Sub-Committee recommends that the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission amend the regulations under the *Broadcasting Act* and the "Code For Broadcast Advertising Of Alcoholic Beverages" to ban that type of advertising of alcoholic beverages, generally known as "lifestyle advertising", on radio and television in Canada.

⁴⁶ Proceedings, Issue 14, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Proceedings, Issue 13, pp. 6, 10, 14.