

Tire Safety Act

● (2140)

Frankly, I sympathize with the parliamentary secretary who has the task of introducing this measure. I think he does so somewhat reluctantly because there are a number of glaring loopholes in the legislation, and if he had the responsibility of drafting and putting together such a piece of legislation I am sure he would have done a much better job. I will certainly give him that much credit.

I must say that I am surprised and disappointed at the manner in which the members of the other place dealt with this bill. I think they did a very inept job, particularly when it is considered that they dealt with it on two different occasions. It was introduced on March 12, 1974 and passed in April of 1974 under the designation Bill S-3. It was re-introduced on October 8, 1974 and passed on October 23.

It is interesting to note when reading its proceedings that the members of the other place did touch to some extent on the number of shortcomings and inadequacies and the unworkability of this bill, but they failed to follow through with any degree of persistence and determination to change it in order to make it effective. As my hon. colleague has indicated, we certainly support the principle of safety and the principle of having standards, but the manner in which this bill is to be administered is sheer folly.

The members of the other place talked of amendments and changes and, as I indicated, there were excellent suggestions, but in the final analysis they succumbed and passed the legislation unamended.

It seems to me that the bill could only be termed a product of the irrational behaviour of bureaucrats, supported and condoned by a passive Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand). I submit that the legislation is unworkable, impractical, ineffective, and in its present form nothing more than sheer bureaucratic nonsense. It will create a nightmarish accumulation of record keeping for the industry. It will increase costs, and I submit that it will not save one life or prevent one injury.

As I read the bill it seems that its main thrust is not to make tires safer but to confuse consumers, harass retailers, and in short, to become nothing more than a nuisance to manufacturers.

Mr. Baldwin: It will create new jobs for Liberal politicians.

Mr. Mazankowski: I was going to get to that. The bill will create these problems because of confusion and because of the bureaucratic devices which will have to be put into place. And as the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) indicates, it will create more government jobs.

To the extent that certain conditions, specifications, and performance standards must be met before a tire can be declared safe and thereby merchandised in Canada, this is indeed a laudable goal, a provision with which we find absolutely no fault whatsoever. To that extent we will support the legislation. We will support the principle enshrined within the bill, and I do not argue for one minute about the desire to have safe tires on our roads. However, the provisions of this bill in one sense do not

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

achieve that, and in other areas they go far beyond that which is necessary. It is in this area that I find it impractical and unworkable.

I have had some experience in the tire retailing and distributing business.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): And with three-wheeled cars.

Mr. Mazankowski: I have sold three-wheeled cars and four-wheeled cars. It is quite obvious that the people responsible for drafting this legislation had absolutely no experience in the business of tire merchandising and with sales patterns with respect to the movement of tires. Moreover, they failed to learn anything from the testimony which was presented before the hearings in the other place. If they did, they would not have proceeded with the legislation; they would have withdrawn it or amended it.

Before I get to specifics I would like to say that I think the evolution of safe tires in this country has been commendable, and I believe all tire manufacturers should be congratulated on their performance in the development of safe tires for Canadian roads. I suggest that the manufacturers will have no difficulty whatsoever in complying with the standards enunciated in the bill. They are meeting those conditions now, and in all likelihood they will continue to meet those conditions whether or not the bill passes.

The fact that this bill is introduced, in my view will not change the quality and the standard of tires now being sold in this country. Moreover, we are told that less than 1 per cent of motor vehicle accidents can be associated with tire failure, so we are dealing here with a situation which represents a minutely small proportion of accidents. However, the significance of that figure is that these accidents are not merely confined to tire defects, as my hon. colleague has pointed out, but to a multiplicity of other conditions such as under-inflation, excessive inflation, improper installation, the speed, wear, and condition of the tire.

Nowhere are there statistics relating to the actual number of accidents which pertain strictly to tire defects and tire failure as a result of manufacture. So we are dealing with an area which represents a very small proportion, and it seems important to me that this fact should be considered when we deal with this legislation. It should be considered in terms of the practicality of initiating another bureaucratic organization to police a very small number of accidents which may occur.

The result of this bill will be that we will have a national tire mark and we will have a national safety symbol. Presumably every tire which is marketed in this country will have this symbol to ensure that it meets the safety code described by the governor in council and regulations in compliance with clause 4 of the bill, but that will not always be the case because imported tires will not necessarily have to bear this symbol. That does not mean to say that they will not comply, but they will not be obligated and it will not be mandatory for the symbol to be located on imported tires. This is confusing and indeed irritating, if not setting up a loophole for potential evaders.