

the auto industry which is having an extremely difficult time now. There are thousands of lay-offs in the auto parts manufacturing industry and in the auto industry itself. Also, thousands of lay-offs from spin-offs linked directly to the industry are being experienced, especially in Ontario and Quebec. This is just another threat of this big government. It is telling the industry what to do, how to do it and, if it is not done, that it will be given a \$1 million fine and plunked in jail for five years.

As a matter of fact I find one section of the proposed act somewhat interesting. I am referring to the one which allows the minister to take a car, or a component of a car, so that he can tear it apart to see what makes it run. Nowhere in the bill does it say that he must put the car back together. Is this a freebee which is being handed to the minister? Does he hand back the car after he is finished with it? How does it work? When I read that section of the proposed act, I chuckled to myself because I could see the minister tearing apart an automobile behind the Parliament buildings to see what makes it tick. I would be surprised if he knew where to put the gas in his car because he never has to do it himself.

In concluding my brief remarks on the bill, I should like to talk about the reality of the situation. The reality is that the minister is not doing anything and that the made-in-Canada energy policy about which the minister talks so proudly is not being changed or improved one iota by the bill. If we look at the campaign promises of 1974 and at the Speech from the Throne in 1976, we realize that the government is making it appear as if it were doing something as part of its national energy policy but is really not changing anything. The goals supplied by Transport Canada to be reached by the auto industry are really meaningless. In fairness to Transport Canada, their rationale is that they must compare their data with the American tests. Only that fact makes sense.

● (1850)

When this bill goes to committee, I invite the minister to explain how he will have a different set of criteria when the automobile market is a North American market. There are many other ways in which the minister could likely achieve fuel efficiency. For instance, the reduction in the speed limit in the United States has had a great effect on fuel consumption there. There are still some provinces—I know speed limitation comes under provincial jurisdiction, I have been around a while, and I am glad the minister is listening—that allow a 70 mile per hour speed limit. I know that the minister does not get along that well with the provinces but perhaps he could use his bubbly personality and smiling countenance to persuade these provinces to cut back their speed limits.

Finally, the bill does not seem to accomplish what the government has indicated it will. I believe that once discussions have taken place in committee and once the Canadian people have seen this bill—the automobile manufacturers do not even know the bill exists—they will see that nothing has changed. Why are we wasting the time of the House with this bill? It is a public relations endeavour by the Minister of Energy, Mines

Fuel Consumption Standards

and Resources which in fact will not prove to be an integral part of the energy legislation and should not be lumped in with the National Energy Program because it is such a phony.

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I might advise you at the beginning that, like my colleague, it is not my intention to speak to Bill C-107 at any great length. However, there are a few remarks I would like to make.

Like my colleague, I am confused as to why the government desires to create additional regulations. It appears to be creating additional regulations at a time when the automobile industry is facing huge unemployment. It is a concern I would like to address briefly because I believe it is an important part of this issue.

First, I would like to deal with something the minister said in his remarks which I think is extremely valuable to Canadian consumers. I think this must come first and foremost today in terms of our ability to buy the products we make and in order to provide jobs for Canadians. The argument appears to be that Canadians need some type of system to control fuel consumption because it is in their own best interests. According to the minister's rationale—which I think is reasonable—if we are able to persuade Canadians to buy cars which use less fuel we will all be better off in the national sense. I think that this is self-evident. I believe it is also self-evident that it is exactly what Canadian consumers have done because they realize, as I think we all realize, that the price of oil and oil based products will increase owing to the government's deliberately forcing prices up. It is not now the time to comment on the degree to which it will force the prices up. However, I believe that Canadians know the government will force prices up and I believe that Canadians also know that oil will become a scarcer commodity over time.

As the minister pointed out, the fact is that under a voluntary system Canadians have moved toward buying more fuel efficient cars. Therefore, one should perhaps question whether more regulations are needed to achieve that end. The minister suggested they are, but I do not believe that. Canadians have enough intelligence to purchase cars which will get better mileage. The question therefore is, would we ever need the club described by the minister in words to the effect that he needs a not so subtle method of encouraging automobile companies to manufacture cars which would achieve better mileage. My fear is that when we are experiencing unemployment in both the manufacturing and auto parts industry and experiencing a reduction in the world-wide market of cars, and we will be seeing a contraction in the number of jobs on a world-wide basis in a market in which we must compete, another club or direction by the government to the industry will do nothing but exacerbate a problem which is already intense for the Canadian automobile industry.

I say that as someone who is trained as an environmentalist and conservationist and therefore very concerned about our use of oil. I think that the important question to ask the minister in committee is: if the voluntary standards are working as he says they are, why is there a necessity to raise the spectre of