

*Tire Safety Act*

these tires, Mr. Speaker, you are lucky. They are very cheap tires and you get cheap performance out of them.

I submit that that kind of standard for a so-called standard tire is totally inadequate. The tire is unsafe, yet it is automatically placed on a new automobile unless you specify that you want a higher ply rating, a higher quality tire. As a result of this, tens of thousands of brand new automobiles take to the roads in Canada with substandard, unsafe tires. It seems to me that this sort of nonsense of calling a tire a 4-ply tire, and then when you read the fine print you find it has a 2-ply rating, should cease.

I hope the result of this legislation will be that the standards are high enough that consumers, whether they purchase a new car without specifying a particular brand of tire, or whether they purchase new tires to replace worn out ones, will not have to try to work their way through the maze of tire sizes, qualities, names, kinds of tread, whether steel belted, non-steel belted, radial, nylon, rayon, polyester—everything but wool. I hope the legislation will require a sufficiently high standard that a good number of these sizes, makes and treads will have been eliminated from the market.

I also think the consumer should be much more realistic in purchasing something like an automobile tire. In trying to save a buck it may cost him his life or a limb. Cheap tires are cheap; you get exactly what you pay for. They are unsafe. Their quality is such that you cannot trust them at speeds of 60 or 70 miles an hour or on rough roads at slower speeds. There is a much greater tendency for them to break down under such conditions.

So far as advertising tires at cheap prices, special sales, and so on, is concerned, I am often amazed that one year a tire that I want of the size and quality I want will cost \$40 or \$45, and a year later, because they have developed some new size or tread, or a tire with a wider or narrower white wall, the tire is out of production and all of a sudden can be purchased for \$15 or \$20. This calls into question the kind of pricing practices used in selling tires which mislead the consumer if not falsely direct him.

If the safety requirements in this legislation raise the standards sufficiently high to reduce not only the massive number of sizes, kinds of tread, makes, and so forth, but also make it possible for the consumer to have a fair degree of confidence in the product he is buying, then the legislation deserves not only the support of all members of the House but the maximum of enforcement. How many times has our parliament passed legislation placing a better standard on a certain sector of our economy, and when the regulations come down or when instructions go out to the civil servants responsible for enforcing the legislation, the government's heart is not in it?

● (1540)

The tire manufacturers, just like the automobile manufacturers, plead and beg and go to whatever other lengths they have to in an effort to get the government to take it easy, to spread the regulations out over a period of several years so that they will have time in which to retool their plant. They will go to great lengths in order to get the government to lay off, with no consideration for the welfare, comfort and safety of the users of the tires. Suddenly

[Mr. Benjamin.]

the urgency concerns the welfare, the capital and the wishes of the manufacturer of the tires.

We, the government, and those in the public service responsible for the enforcement of the laws should keep in mind that tire manufacturers are very adept at retooling very quickly when they come up with a new kind of tire. In that situation there is no problem. However, when regulations are involved, suddenly they need all kinds of time. They say they must have time to recover their capital costs, and so on. In such cases the legislation is not enforced for a period of many months, and sometimes years. We have seen this happen in many other areas such as packaging, labelling, and so on.

I hope this is not the case in this instance. I hope the minister and his officials will not allow the tire and automobile manufacturers, as well as the dealers, an inordinate length of time in which to abide by this legislation. That is not necessary. I hope it is mandatory at a very early date. I hope also that the public will realize that tires may cost a few dollars more but consumers will get a better quality tire. I hope they realize that in fact they will get their money's worth, because until now, on too many occasions and in respect of too many kinds of tires, even when people bought the best tires they were not getting their money's worth but, rather, were being conned into cleaning out the tire inventory of some manufacturer and were receiving inadequate and unsafe tires.

I hope not only that the bill passes quickly, but is enforced quickly and that we do not move in the way we have on many previous occasions and allow these people to make excuses and request an inordinate length of time in which to abide by the legislation. They always have been able to move quickly when it has suited their purpose. Now we want them to do so in order to suit the needs of the consumers of automobile tires in Canada.

**Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, the tire distributors in my area have expressed up until just recently very serious concerns and reservations concerning the very heavy onus and responsibility that would be placed upon them. I am pleased to see that the government has withdrawn the pertinent sections which would place the responsibility for registration and recording upon the small businessmen who already, as hon. members of this House know, are overwhelmed by the daily pressure to provide bureaucratic information that must cross their desks and which subsequently ends up in some remote area of Ottawa. So certainly there was an enormous sigh of relief or of well-being from the automotive dealers and the industry concerning the subject of registration.

I recognize the advantages involved in the registration of tires. I recognize the fact that now the responsibility will be on the consumer to fill out the proposed registration card and send it to the tire manufacturer. I wonder how many Canadian consumers will in fact bother to fill out the registration card. I suppose it will be similar to the situation in respect of the filling out of warranty cards in relation to electric frying pans, toasters, and some of the other commodities on the market which have a warranty. Some people are very assiduous and faithful in sending in the warranties—they protect their investment—while others simply ignore the warranty. The peril is then with the individual. The responsibility is on the individual to