

Octane cannot be measured, Mr. Speaker, it is simply a saturated hydrocarbon whose formula is C_8H_{18} that I do remember. Besides the octane rating is used only to measure anti-knock value. Instead of listening to our distinguished colleagues who seem to be omniscient, perhaps someone could have given more precise indications. In fact, the other day when I was watching television I heard the president of a major oil company give interesting facts on the subject of lead and octane in gasoline.

My colleague from Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) knows a great deal about that, but we have to admit that the business of the House is so well organized that we were taken by surprise with this matter. So we are discussing pointlessly, mainly to confess our ignorance.

It would be important, I suggest, to talk instead about something we know.

That is why I would not want to take up much more time of the House. I do not know very much about this subject.

I remember with pleasure what I have learned at university, but unfortunately my recollections are beginning to wear off. I would like an expert to inform us on this important question when the bill reaches the committee stage.

[English]

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that perhaps this bill is more important than some members realize. I come from an area where there is an international airport, and I believe that the quality of gas and various types of fuel is very important. I am told that the octane rating is a fundamental factor in considering gasoline. I wonder whether the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) had in mind the discrepancy in price between various octane ratings. The consumer is not in a position to assess whether an extra five cents per gallon guarantees him an extra five cents or only an extra cent in value. This was probably in the mind of the capable Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Mahoney) when he made his observations.

I support the bill, Mr. Speaker. I also recommend that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) add to his not so busy schedule—and Dr. Young, now paid but unemployed, with his staff of 120—an investigation of the discrepancy in the price charged for gasolines with various octane ratings.

[Translation]

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

A short while ago, I thought I heard the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Isabelle) referring to the fact that the business of the House seemed to be more or less well planned at this hour of the day on Fridays. In my opinion, it is appropriate that this House and the hon. Parliamentary Secretary know that the government members were very well prepared to discuss items 1 and 2 on today's order

National Trade Mark and True Labelling Act

paper, meaning the bills introduced by the House leader of the official opposition, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), and the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) which deal with amendments to the British North America Act and abolition of corporal punishment, respectively.

Had it not been for the absence of some of the official opposition members, we might have been able to proceed with consideration of the bills which were at the top of the list.

• (4:30 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. J. E. Walker (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I believe that many of the comments which have been made go far beyond the purpose of this bill, which is framed in a very narrow context. I would have some difficulty in agreeing that the bill should go to committee on the basis of some of those speeches which have been made. If it went to the committee, on the basis of some of those speeches, one might think it was being sent there to enable the Standing Committee to conduct a full-scale investigation of the entire gasoline retailing industry. That is not the purpose of the bill. I shall read the explanatory note, which is very clear:

The intent of this bill is to require that all gasoline which is sold to the public shall have conspicuously displayed at such place of sale the octane rating according to a recognized standard to be prescribed by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

This is a narrow subject, and if the bill goes to committee that is the subject that will be discussed. I think it is time to bring our consideration of this bill into perspective and to consider what the mover of the motion had in mind. When I drive to a gasoline pump and ask the attendant to fill the tank of my car, even if I see a sign showing the octane rating of the gas I do not know what it means. I do not know what an octane rating is. For all I know, it could be a three-legged spider.

I remind the House that the purpose of the bill is very narrow. It has to do with the display of a sign on gas pumps to advise the sophisticated few who know what an octane rating is of the octane rating of the gasoline they are buying. I see that the sponsor of the bill is nodding his head. Bearing that narrow context of the bill in mind, it might be a good measure to send to committee for investigation—but only in that very narrow context. I am not sure what the mover of the motion had in mind, nor what enlightenment he felt the bill would give the public. He must know what an octane rating is. I suggest that gasoline companies could give a great deal of information to the public about the meaning of an octane rating.

I wanted to bring to the attention of the House the fact that this bill is framed in a very narrow context. An octane rating may or may not mean anything to the public; however, the mover of the bill thinks it will mean something. I hope the committee to which this bill is referred will not go beyond the narrow context of the bill and that the discussion will not lead to a wide,