

Private Members' Business

Could this government not fall on the side of safety for once and believe our own scientists at home who testified that manganese intoxication mimics Parkinson's disease?

Let me conclude by saying that this is a bill that has been introduced by my colleague from Lambton—Middlesex and we should all salute him. It seeks to protect the health of Canadians in addition to the cleanliness of our air and helping the farming economy. Yet for reasons I cannot comprehend, the government remains adverse to this bill. I hope one day soon the government will change its mind and its heart for the future health of all Canadians.

Mr. Benno Friesen (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-226, a private member's bill, which is entitled an act to reduce automotive pollution. With that in mind, it also states "the purpose of the bill is to reduce automotive pollution".

• (2025)

Who can argue with that kind of a purpose in legislation? I think all of us are environmentally conscious enough to realize there is a real need to do this.

I remember when we moved to the Fraser Valley back in 1938. On any given day you would wake up in the morning and get a pristine view of the north shore mountains. They were never shrouded in pollution or smoke, even though there were numerous sawmills around. There was always a clear view.

Now in Vancouver on any day when there is an inversion there is a yellowish-purple cloud hanging over the city and shrouding the mountains. As the wind blows up the Fraser Valley it acts somewhat like a chimney. It funnels that pollution up the valley and cities like Abbotsford and Chilliwack and Hope which do not have an industrial base are now getting the so-called benefit of the automotive pollution from the Vancouver area. The air is more polluted up the valley than it is in the lower valley.

We recognize there is a need to reduce automotive pollution. There is an urgency to that need so we cannot argue with the purpose, nor can we argue with the goal. The goal is stated in clause 3 first of all to eliminate MMT. We cannot argue with that. It is a long chemical

term that I cannot even sneeze out. I will not even try. My scientist friend, a former university professor who will follow me on this side, can deal with the scientific side of it.

The purpose is to eliminate MMT. Regardless of whether the Royal Society of Canada's commission on lead says it is not a serious pollutant, it is a pollutant. Therefore the day should come when we get rid of it. We cannot argue with that goal, nor can we argue with the ultimate goal of 3.2 per cent oxygen in the gas.

We already have the 10 per cent ethanol in gasoline. In fact this government is participating in a program with Mohawk Oil Company in British Columbia to have ethanol gasoline distributed all through the Fraser Valley. I use that gasoline whenever I can because I know it will help reduce the amount of destructive emissions in the air. That is a laudable goal.

There is a problem with the bill. That is the guillotine. It says in clause 10 that with the passage of this bill the act shall come into force six months after it is assented to. The bill actually ignores what is going on in the entire scientific and government communities.

The fact is that a tremendous amount of research is being done in the industrial community, in the research community outside the industrial components, by the provincial governments, by the federal government. This is research that is in train to arrive at some of these goals to reduce the pollution.

The six-month guillotine that this imposes on all that research says in effect that while the research is going on it may not come to its conclusion of the 3.2 per cent oxygen or the elimination of MMT. Regardless of what the stage of research is at that moment, forget it all.

An illegal product is now being produced. You can neither produce whatever you were working on nor can you sell it. The sale of a product that contains MMT or has an oxygen level below 3.2 per cent is in contravention of the act and is liable for a fine up to \$100,000. That is where I have a problem with the bill, not even with a fine, or even the sale of it if the technology has arrived at that level.

• (2030)

The problem is if it could be done then it would be great. But this bill introduces the notion that you have to be able to accomplish this and if you do not you will be fined. If the scientific community does not achieve what