

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

can only repeat tonight, on behalf of my minister, what he has already stated to the hon. member, that it is highly unlikely a bill to amend the Old Age Security Act will be presented to the House this session.

POLLUTION—REGULATIONS RESPECTING
AUTOMOBILES—INQUIRY AS TO ACTION

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): Mr. Speaker, the other day I asked what the government was doing in respect of outlawing car exhausts which produce air pollution. I had in mind the situation in the United States where the federal authority has recently settled out of court an action against a car manufacturing company in respect of this very matter. I also had in mind tougher action by New York state, which at this moment is taking a car manufacturing company to court to enforce the New York anti-pollution car exhaust act.

The question I tried to raise was not acceptable during the question period, so I raise it again this evening. With the few moments I have available I want to remind hon. members in the House that until recent years the North American car industry has had practically a free hand in regard to the design of component parts for its products, so far as safety is concerned. To underline the significance of that fact let me state that there are three main ingredients in car accidents: the first is the car, the second is the driver and the third is the road. For years in Canada we have been killing 100 persons a week, wounding 3,000 a week and losing millions of dollars in economic tolls due to car crashes, a great many of which were avoidable. In the last four years, the period in which many of the present members came into the house, no fewer than 20,000 Canadians have been killed, 600,000 have been wounded and billions of dollars have been lost through car accidents.

Air pollution from car exhausts is part of this general problem. My question was, what is the federal government doing to give leadership and co-ordination to provincial authorities to enforce realistic anti-pollution air exhaust legislation? There are enough cars sold in Canada to have a significant effect on the total North American car market. Cars sold in Canada could be fitted with safety features even though Washington fails to act. It is disturbing to note that our new Canadian car safety standards, recently announced with a flourish of car horns, are simply extensions of the standards set in Washington, where the

car industry has for many years dragged its feet in respect of public safety.

In the United States the industry's motive is still directed to eye and sales appeal rather than to safety. Car bumpers are actually decorations, a sort of cosmetic rather than a safety feature. A standard bumper height for all cars could save a great many lives and a great many millions of dollars. In conclusion let me repeat my question: What is the law of our land, and what is our federal authority doing to co-ordinate and give leadership to the provinces, which have a great deal of authority in this field, to enforce specific laws regarding air pollution and exhaust standards?

● (10:10 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Loiselle (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I wish at the outset to congratulate the hon. member for Surrey (Mr. Mather) for bringing up this question, especially at this time, since there will be at the Chateau Laurier during the next three days the general annual meeting of the Ottawa district Ontario Motor League. That association concerns itself with all matters related to automobiles and I know the interest and importance the hon. member attaches to such a question.

However, I would not like him to believe that the Canadian government scorns all those good intentions and does not consider any change. As he knows, Bill C-137, entitled an "Act respecting the use of national safety marks in relation to motor vehicles and to provide for safety standards..." was given first reading on November 3.

With regard to safety and air pollution, here is what clause 2(h) of the bill says, and I quote:

"safety standards" means standards regulating the design, construction or functioning of motor vehicles and their components for the purpose of protecting persons against personal injury, impairment of health or death.

If we talk about air pollution, this is an indication that there is an impairment of health and, under this clause of Bill C-137, the minister will have the authority to prosecute those who will not meet the required standards. I urge the hon. members of the opposition to show all their devotion, their goodwill and to offer their suggestions when this bill comes up for second reading in a week or two, and especially when it is sent to the Committee on Transport and communications.