

National Trade Mark and True Labelling Act

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Because of the modesty of the acting government whip, I wonder whether I might point out that I believe there is general agreement to let the first eight items stand and proceed with Order No. 9, a bill in the name of the acting government whip.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that the first eight items stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is so ordered. Orders 1 to 8 inclusive stand.

* * *

● (4:00 p.m.)

**NATIONAL TRADE MARK AND TRUE
LABELLING ACT**

**OCTANE RATING OF GASOLINE TO BE CONSPICUOUSLY
DISPLAYED AT RETAIL OUTLETS**

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Ottawa West) moved that Bill C-26, to amend the National Trade Mark and True Labelling Act (octane rating of gasoline), be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be brief. Like many consumers, I buy gasoline. The car that I own is a 1969 Ford.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): No commercials, please.

Mr. Francis: I have purchased gasoline in many parts of Canada and I have found a wide discrepancy in the quality of the product that goes into our gas tanks. I have on occasion purchased what is supposed to be a superior brand with a higher octane rating and the performance of my motor has been very different from when I have filled my tank with other gasolines. Last summer I made a holiday trip to the fine province of New Brunswick, so ably represented by members in the House, and when I purchased gasoline there I noticed that in every gas station the octane rating of gasoline was conspicuously displayed. Apparently there is a law in New Brunswick which compels the octane rating to be displayed. I submit through you, Mr. Speaker, to hon. members that the existence of such a law demonstrates the feasibility of complying with the recommendation in the bill which I have the honour to present this afternoon.

The purpose of the bill is very simple. It is that at every retail gasoline pump there shall be displayed, in accordance with standards prescribed by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford), the octane rating of the product which the consumer is buying. In this way it should be possible to eliminate the deception that takes place when consumers buy gasoline. I have had the experience of buying what was supposed to be a higher grade gasoline in the city and I have

[Mr. Francis.]

known from the performance of my motor that it did not come up to the standard I expected.

Therefore, I move second reading of this bill which has as its very simple purpose the display, in technical terms to be prescribed by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, by vendors of the rating of gasoline on gasoline pumps. I urge hon. members to support the bill.

Mr. David Anderson (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I rise not to oppose the excellent bill put forward by the acting government whip, which for the first time in my memory at one of these afternoon sessions seems likely to proceed to a vote, but simply to point out that while we are on the subject of what should be displayed and what the public should know about the gasoline that we buy, we should know that the octane rating is a relatively minor factor among all the others which at least should be known to the public.

There is, of course, no doubt that unscrupulous dealers—and certain discount dealers might be in that category: I am not suggesting that my hon. friends are always searching out the cheapest retailers of gasoline—might be substituting a low octane gasoline for a higher octane gasoline and thus defrauding the public. In that case, I think the bill is a good one in that it would permit testing to take place very quickly and easily. If someone is advertising gasoline with a high octane reading and it turns out to have a lower octane reading, then prosecution should be possible.

When gasoline is simply rated top-line, medium range and low octane, it might not be possible to start the same type of prosecution to prevent the type of activity mentioned by my hon. friend. However, I feel that a great deal more should be said on the subject of gasoline. Gasoline is not a simple product. If I may mention another product with which one or two hon. members at least are also familiar, gasoline is rather like whisky. Whiskies may have the same octane rating or potency, but there may be a great variation in their effects as well as, perhaps, in their after-effects about which we would wish to know before proceeding.

Fortunately, with gasoline the results are not immediately damaging to the individual, but I feel that such factors as the lead content of gasoline should be known. Also, there are many aromatics which are added to gasoline and which vary greatly in different types of gasoline and have serious pollution effects. I think this, also, is a matter that should be considered in much the same manner as the octane rating. I stress this because we tend to drive up to a gas station, thinking we will get much the same type of gasoline regardless of the gasoline company or where we are. This is not so. There are many additives which, we are told by scientists, are highly dangerous to our environment from the point of view of pollution. Most hon. members are concerned about pollution and about buying a product which would do the least damage, but nevertheless are unable to do so because we simply do not know the true facts about gasoline and what we are buying.

I do not wish to suggest that the detailed content of gasoline must be listed, because obviously a member of