

*Fuel Consumption Standards*

per 100 miles of driving. That may be the kind of difference we get in mandated fleet averages. The cost of that disruption in terms of job loss is huge. That is what we now know from the emission control side. We have not achieved major reductions; we have achieved a major loss of jobs.

If we take the time to look at this question, we will inevitably come to this conclusion. The single best way to achieve the objective of reduced consumption of oil in cars is not to talk about mandating industry averages but to begin to review what we have done in a regulatory way in Canada to make the construction of automobiles in this country more time consuming, more expensive and more and more subject to government scrutiny.

I said I would not speak at length. It is not my intention to speak much longer. I will close with this. I hope the minister is correct in his comments on the bill when he says he does not intend to proceed with mandatory minimum standards. I fear that is not the case. I urge all members to look at this question in terms of whether there are better ways to make our automobiles more efficient and to reduce our consumption of gas.

We should look, with the experience of the effect of excessive government regulation over the past 15 years, at better ways of achieving our goal than contemplating additional regulation. As a general rule, we should realize that regulation is useful and important when it serves the public good. For example, no one in the House would quarrel with regulations relating to the safety of automobiles. No one in the House would abandon the idea that automobiles should not be sold in this country unless they are safe to drive. When there is evidence that we must pay more than need be and that energy is being used inefficiently to achieve at best an environmental improvement, if we are to take seriously the issue the minister says this bill is about, I intend to go on urging a review of the regulations, notably in the emissions control area. They are causing job loss, additional cost and cause us to use more oil than need be used for apparently, on the basis of the most recent evidence, no significant benefit. It is only for that reason that I rose to speak tonight. I hope and pray that we will see the wisdom of what transpired in this area in the United States in the last year.

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to place some remarks on the record concerning the bill presently before the House.

We must try to develop an effective program for a fuel-efficient automotive industry. As the minister pointed out, the transportation industry consumes an enormous proportion of the energy that we either develop or import into this country. Any savings in that sector, which is a maximum consumer of that worthwhile energy product, is certainly a worthwhile endeavour.

Unfortunately, when proceeding through the bill we find we are in a very typical situation that we find with the entire energy program. The goals as stated are generally sound in the sense that they purport to implement conservation and to proceed in a very rational manner. However, when we go

through the material in the legislation, we find that it is not a strong program. In fact, the government is backing away from its commitment to conservation and alternate energy. The bill provides loopholes which permit the industry to avoid what is seen by the Canadian public as acceptable and desirable levels of conservation and, in this case, the conservation of liquid transportation fuels. The previous speaker pointed out that conservation is extremely important. Unfortunately, he and his party are mistaken in many ways in believing that the marketplace alone will provide the correct approach to conservation. He is also mistaken in thinking it will develop the correct and acceptable product to serve the long-term interest of all Canadians. Without some form of guidance, some form of incentive, some form of example, the marketplace will probably provide the cheapest product that will return the greatest amount of money to the producer. That goal is not necessarily consistent with the needs of all Canadians. Unfortunately, the bill, although recognizing the need to conserve fuel through more stringent automobile consumption standards, does not provide the mechanism by which the accountability of those corporations can be ensured.

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Our intention is to vote against this particular bill. Those consumption standards are not adequate and are not clearly defined, and a progressive and effective program for fuel efficiency standard has not been developed. There is no opportunity to develop conservation in a voluntary program, a program in which the government intends to try to jawbone or sweet-talk the industry into providing these standards.

A colleague who spoke before me hit the nail on the head when he said that the automobile industry is a North American industry; that this, is not a Canadian industry. The Americans will develop those automobiles in such a manner that they can survive in a very tough and competitive industry at this point in time. In the past, the auto industry, along with other industries with a North American orientation, have bashed the Canadian government into the earth when it has attempted to sweet-talk or jawbone them without putting in place an effective program of restraints. So, by and large, I do not think that the government intends to carry this through. This is certainly another Liberal sweet-talking proposition without enforcement. Clearly we support—and I think it has been supported on all sides—the concept of fuel efficiency standards for automobiles.

Again, as the minister pointed out, there is a need to provide for conversion from automobile fuel systems that involve gasoline and oil fuels into propane natural gas and other alternative fuels. Those programs are largely token, and not serious enough at this point in time.

Another objectionable facet of the bill—and again we take exception to the pasture of the previous speaker—is the matter of emission control. There is a recommendation in the report of the subcommittee report on acid rain that Canadian emission standards be brought down to the point where the United