

Gasoline Labelling

really have all the properties they want to sell us on. I have been driving a car for over 30 years and I used the various brands, varieties and components offered, and I must admit, Madam Speaker, that I did not see much difference. Of course, there is a difference between regular, yellow as it is commonly called, and red, or extra, but is there really the difference that is indicated? Does the difference that is indicated really exist in terms of the price differential?

Like most car drivers I made certain checks on my gas mileage when I filled up with extra at 6 cents, 8 cents, 9 cents and sometimes even 12 cents a gallon more than regular, yellow. Of course, I noticed I was getting better gas mileage with extra, but not in proportion to what I was paying. So, particularly with respect to engines used in automobiles, I say we should rather standardize the manufacturing of those engines, bearing in mind the fuel they must use.

● (1740)

All automobile and engine manufacturers should be required to provide engines which run for all practical purposes on the same type of gas. The result would be twofold. First of all, does it really matter whether it costs more to producers to build various types of engines or carburetors, since it is much more the carburetor than the engine which is involved in the choice of the proper grade of gas? Then, would it not be a saving or protection of some sort for the consumer if we forced manufacturers to build only one type of engine which would run on only one type of gas or fuel? Should we not compel gas producers to supply for automobile consumption only one sort of gas which would be the same?

The question I am asking therefore is this: Would not this gas be more economical if gas producers supplied only one type of gas with the same octane rating, whether super or regular, which would have only one name or grade? I believe that in this way, gas would be less expensive. The installations that refineries have to provide for these various grades would not be necessary and perhaps this could result in savings. I am not sure about this because I wonder if there really is a lot of difference between all these types of gasoline. I do not believe there is; the difference is much more significant in the publicity than in the real product.

On that point—and hon. members could recommend this to the government—we would have much more to gain in my opinion if products were standardized and varieties, names and attributes of products were restricted. We should aim at eliminating these things which only confuse the general consumer public. The poor consumer does not know what he buys and very few people know and distinguish among the various grades of gasoline. I do not want to suggest that we men are more knowledgeable than women in this field, but it is true that today more and more women are driving cars. They must fill their tanks.

Can the ladies really appreciate the differences among the various fuels that they are offered? They follow the advice of salesmen, of distributors, and buy what is recommended without seeing the difference. Nearly 30 per cent of the people who drive cars today are women. Is there not complete abuse of these people who are not familiar with

[Mr. Lessard.]

the technology since there is already some abuse as concerns the 90 per cent of men who are not more familiar with this technology than women? On this point, I would be personally opposed to a concentration of our efforts in the fields suggested by the hon. member, and I would much prefer that the gasoline and motor manufacturers be required to standardize these things so that they all use the same fuel and that we no longer have to pay for these various fuels and the publicity required to extol the virtues of these products to the consumer. Very often, these virtues do not exist.

It is in that direction, I think, that we should make our efforts, Madam Speaker, and I would advise my colleague from Ottawa West to introduce some other legislation at the first opportunity so that he may work and devote his energy along that line. I thank him in anticipation.

[English]

Mr. Joseph-Philippe Guay (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I know that the bill before us is intended to ensure that consumers are getting their money's worth when they buy gasoline. I am sure this is in the mind of the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis).

In this day and age everything is inspected. All food is inspected. In all areas there are provincial inspectors as well as federal inspectors. When we were discussing a similar matter in 1970 a former member of parliament from Calgary South said it was possible that the oil companies would be pleased to take up a suggestion made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), by appearing before a committee of the House and answering any questions put to them by hon. members.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order. The hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business having expired, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock tonight.

At 5.45 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF COMMONS ACT, THE SALARIES ACT AND THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

On the order:

Consideration of report stage of Bill C-44, an act to amend the Senate and House of Commons Act, the Salaries Act and the Parliamentary Secretaries Act, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.—The President of the Privy Council.