

mates, laboratory testing of the various samplings would involve an expenditure of more than \$700,000. I believe this amount would be better invested in social advertising which I submit is now lacking in the information available to consumers.

I believe this debate gives us an opportunity to move one step further in discharging the government's responsibility to legislate on consumer information. Clearly, by preventing merchandizers to give necessary information, one would in the final analysis be guilty by omission. The preventing or non-requiring of certain merchandizers to give information allows them to profit by the consumers' ignorance, by selling products that are not those really needed to drive and properly use motor vehicles.

Our obligation to force merchandizers to completely inform must not in my view affect the social impact of advertising, which we will have to consider during the coming month, if our overall policy on or comprehensive approach to consumer protection is to reach its goals.

It must be emphasized that during the last few years, the government also acted to restrict media advertising time. This had to be done, because it was realized that merchandizers could literally submerge the consumers under a flow of information that was not necessarily useful to properly choose a product.

We have also witnessed the discussion centering on children advertising. This is another aspect of the social impact of advertising I was mentioning. I feel it is of paramount importance at this stage. It is actually towards the consumers who are the less protected and the less able to defend themselves that we must direct our attention, especially when we discover that, were we to agree to what the hon. member for Ottawa West is proposing, we would have a piece of legislation which would involve spending considerable sums of money that might not have the immediate results expected.

Some other hon. members who spoke before me have stressed the complexity of implementation of such a measure. They mentioned, among other things, that it was not obvious that it was constitutional, or within the authority of the federal government. They also emphasized the fact that it would be difficult to administer this legislation.

I think, Madam Speaker, that the opportunity afforded to us by the hon. member for Ottawa West to consider the publicity, the information which must be made available to the consumers is a responsibility which has been amply debated in recent years. The government has taken positive action that has really urged the distributors to act bearing in mind that great objective involving consumer protection and I am sure there is not one member present here who does not partake of that objective which the hon. member for Ottawa West is striving for.

For that reason, Madam Speaker, I would invite the hon. member for Ottawa West to participate in the discussions of the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs on Bill C-2 and particularly to read the briefs which have been presented and the evidence which has been brought by the 20 witnesses who appeared before the commission and who all discussed clause 36 of this bill, which contains, I think, the elements necessary to the solution of the problem he raised in his bill.

Gasoline Labelling

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Madam Speaker, the proposal which is now before us in connection with bill C-217, introduced by the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) springs of course from a good thought and a good intention, which is to better protect and inform the Canadian consumer, particularly as regards the gas he buys regularly.

However, I would like to make a comment. I have known my colleague from Ottawa West for many years, and having had the pleasure to sit with him in this House, I acknowledge him as an expert in parliamentary debate, especially during private members' hour.

During the many years we sat in this House we were witness to his many interventions and his participation during private members' hour.

Mr. Francis: I rise on a question of privilege, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): The hon. member for Ottawa West.

Mr. Francis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I did not take part in private members' hours during this Parliament, in spite of everything I did during previous Parliaments.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Lessard: Madam Speaker, does my hon. colleague mean to say that somehow he changed or became wiser? I am not sure at all that this is the case. It is probably true that he was not as present in those debates during this Parliament but, as he suggests himself, during previous Parliaments we were witness to his many interventions—and this is not a reproach, far from it, since it gave an opportunity to communicate to his colleagues and myself his wide knowledge in certain areas, as indeed he did again today. He is concerned about the consumer and he would like the protection that was previously given by gasoline retailers by indicating the octane rating—a current practice a few years ago that was abandoned in most, not to say all, provinces—to be reinstated so the consumer who parks his car near a gas station can get the quality of fuel he wants for his vehicle.

His idea may be good. It remains to be seen whether from a practical point of view that situation which existed previously really protected the consumer. Personally I would rather be inclined to ask myself if the question should not be examined from another angle. Instead of asking gas companies, dealers and distributors to indicate at their pump stations the octane rating of the gas sold and the various varieties offered to consuming customers in general, I wonder if we should not standardize gas. It seems that private enterprise in its constant search for new products or rather new clients tends to diversify the variety of its products in the hopes of meeting a non-requirement in several cases and create an appetite, a need, through advertising, through the sale of new products which advertising says are always the best offered on the market.

I am not at all convinced that all that variety of products, and in this case the various kinds of gas offered,