

Tire Safety Act

work they carried out in order to make this bill as relevant and meaningful as possible, and on the fact that they conducted hearings in order to bring forward the evidence necessary for the drafting of this legislation and for making sure it is in line with the needs of the industry and the needs of the economy.

While I am not usually the first to compliment the government, in this case I compliment them for having broadly consulted the industry regarding what ought to be included in this legislation. We on this side and, I am sure, hon. members opposite have often tried to encourage the government to seek more advice from those who know best with regard to what kind of legislation would be helpful to the economy and to the benefit of the consumer in this area. There have been a good many who have already raised the issue of the kind of bureaucratic paperwork which would have been involved in the administration of this legislation should it have passed in its original form. That kind of discussion and debate brings me to a second point. I should like to pay a compliment to the government for listening to opposition from within its own ranks and from across the chamber to the extent that it is now willing to introduce an amendment which will, by and large, eliminate that kind of bureaucratic paperwork.

I have received representations from the retail industry in my riding. These people were very concerned about the onerous work which would have been involved in processing the registration of tires as outlined in this bill in its original form. I shudder to think of the great amount of paperwork which would have been involved and the cost which would have been passed on to the consumer had the legislation passed in its original form. So I sincerely compliment the government on the way it has responded to criticism in this regard.

However, there are still two areas I should like to bring to the attention of the minister and the government in which they could help the industry; and by helping the industry I believe they would help consumers. I think it would be helpful if the government gave some sense of assurance and security to the industry regarding its own future in relation, for example, to tariff duties or import duties. I have some statistics regarding the net balance of the import and export of tires. I note that between 1967 and 1974, a period of eight years, the import of tires increased fourfold. Granted, the export has also increased.

However, it seems to me that if the federal government really wants to help indigenous industry in Canada, it could do so, not by wholesale protectionism and raising tariff walls around the country, but by at least making sure that the industry knows where it is in terms of the tariffs which would exist. If the tariffs are going to fluctuate between 17 per cent and 12 per cent, the industry will never know where it is and will never know how to plan the future. The government would be doing our economy a great service if it gave the industry some kind of assurance that it could anticipate the level of protection it will receive in the way of tariff duties.

● (1600)

I should like to refer to another area which has already been mentioned by the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Brisco), and that is advertising. I am sure it is

[Mr. Friesen.]

common not only to the tire industry but to many other industries that a great deal of misleading advertising goes on—not so much outright lying about the quality of the product as the creation of a climate of “buyer beware”. Some years ago I worked in a gas station and I was confused about the quality of tires I was selling to unsuspecting buyers. The company had a premium tire which was the top of the line, but not many years later it came out with a deluxe tire. It was up to the sales agent to make sure the buyer understood that the premium tire was no longer the top of the line, but the deluxe tire was. Then they produced a super deluxe tire. Again, it was a case of “buyer beware”. Was the super deluxe the top of the line, or was a radial or steel belted tire better than the super deluxe?

I know the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) has done a considerable amount of work to try to stop this kind of misleading advertising in all industries. There should no longer be a “buyer beware” atmosphere in the marketplace. I realize we cannot always take the buyer by the hand and make sure he is not going to get hurt; he has to exercise some intelligence and independence in the marketplace and be responsible for his own purchases—but he should not be subjected to misleading advertising.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I commend the government for introducing amendments that I believe will greatly improve the tire industry. I should like the government to entertain suggestions that in my opinion would give the industry a better sense of security in planning its direction and providing the kind of industry that Canada deserves. Also, the unsuspecting consumer should not be left to the devices of the advertising agencies of tire manufacturers when faced with the classification of tires.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the other place introduced this bill concerning vehicle safety by designing a trademark for Canadian-produced tires. I am pleased to see that on the “Canadian approved” label there will be included several other pieces of necessary information. One is the ply rating and what it means, and the other is the class of tire—premium, first-line, second-line or whatever. Thus, the buyer will have a yardstick and will know whether he is getting a bargain.

I agree that it was not fair or reasonable to leave the registration of tires in the hands of the corner service station but, rather, to leave it with the manufacturer. The information will be on the warranty returned to the manufacturer, and recalls can be made in an orderly manner. Changes of address and other things will be recorded by the manufacturer, who will have on hand the machinery to check vehicle records and ascertain who owns the tires if recall should be necessary.

The legislation covers two points of prime importance. In many cases I do not think the manufacturers were very honest in the manner of advertising tires. A few years ago most tires were classed as equal; the 4-ply rating was listed as a 2-ply tire. Two-ply tires were put on almost every new car in the country by the manufacturers of automobiles. In my opinion, that was risking the safety of everyone who drove on those tires. It was all very well in the city to use a 2-ply tire, although if you ran over a broken bottle or a small stone it was disastrous. In rural areas, however, with