



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

SPEECH

Wednesday, 26 June 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Wednesday, 26 June 2013
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Questioner
Speaker Katter, Bob, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (15:31): I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent private Members' business notice No. 1 given for Wednesday, 26 June 2013, Renewable Fuel Bill 2013 standing in the name of the Member for Kennedy, being called on immediately and being given precedence over all other business until all stages of the bill have been concluded.

An opposition member interjecting—

Mr KATTER: A member of the opposition said, 'Is everybody going to support it?' I suspect that, yes, we will not get any support in this chamber. I held up yesterday a map of the world, and all of the countries in the world outside of Africa were in colour, meaning they were on biofuels, ethanol—outside of the oil-producing countries, of course. The only country on earth that was in grey, not having ethanol, was Australia.

A person over here is laughing. He thinks it is funny. A report we read said that 1,400 people died in Sydney last year as a result of motor vehicle emissions. The head of the AMA has said more people die from motor vehicle emissions than from motor vehicle accidents, and a member for Western Australia thinks it is funny. Well, it is a most extraordinary comment. He thinks it is funny—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! Those members out of their place in the chamber and having conversations: either move back to your places in the chamber or leave the chamber quietly and in an orderly fashion. The member for Kennedy has the call.

Mr KATTER: For people who cannot do any homework, they have never done any research but are very good on personal invective—that is their characteristic, their laugh. That is their intellectual contribution, to laugh. We say that more people are dying of motor vehicle emissions than motor vehicle accidents. The government continue to do nothing about it. A former Premier of New South Wales, Mr Iemma, said that he could not go another day with having the deaths of people on his conscious who simply do not have to die. The Americans went to ethanol not to help their farmers, not to cut themselves off from the \$230,000 million that is going to the Middle Eastern oil producers; they did it because of the health results that came out of California, which indicated that maybe tens of thousands of people were dying as a result of motor vehicle emissions

So the American government moved the air quality control act. When you go under a certain ozone retention level, when you go to a certain level of pollution, it triggers the air quality control act. That was how ethanol was introduced in the United States. According to newspaper reports, which I hope to verify shortly, America seems to be up around 12 or 15 per cent now.

The American government claim that, over the next five years, they will be self-sufficient in oil. They will not be sending \$230,000 million a year to the Middle Eastern oil producers. That money will be going into the pockets of Americans. But, at the present moment, we are sending \$19,500 million every year to the Middle Eastern oil producers which we do not have to send them. As we rise up today, we say: 'Do you want to create 50,000 jobs in rural Australia? Do you want to take that \$20,000 million which your country is losing every year and give it to Australians instead of rich potentates in Middle Eastern countries?' We are asking you: 'Do you want people to continue to die who simply do not have to die?'

I refer to the works of Jonathan Streeton, the eminent thoracic surgeon in Melbourne, who has been fighting this battle all his life, and of Professor Carney from the University of Sydney, who has been fighting this battle for most of his life and of all the other heroes in the other countries who have saved millions of lives as a result of the initiative.

In addition, we have our rural industries in a desperate plight. You would be well aware of this, Mr Deputy Speaker Scott, with the value to your electorate of the ethanol industry. The lot feeders were squealing because they said there would be a 15 per cent rise in grain prices. Heaven only knows! I attended a meeting in Western Australia, in the electorate of the member who was thinking this was funny and jeering at me, and 1,063 attended the meeting. The Liberal senator's contribution was to say, 'I know you all want to exit, and it is our duty to give you an exit with dignity.'

I asked one of the people there that night, one of the biggest grain producers in Australia, if that was the attitude of people at the meeting. He said that there would not have been a single person of the 1,063 people there—not a single person—that wanted to exit the industry. They desperately wanted to stay on. If there had been an extra 15 per cent over the last 10 years, those people would not be in the dire straits they are in now. As you would be well aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, 15 per cent on your gross for most farmers in this country would be a 100 or 200 per cent increase in your net income or your ability to pay the banks.

So it is of immense value to the grain industry in Australia. It is of immense value to the cattle industry in Australia, where they would have unlimited amounts of distillers' grain, which is three times more nutritious than ordinary grain and has the same calorific value. In America, when I went over there on an ethanol tour—the only time I have ever been out of Australia—the price was half what it was for conventional grain.

The cattle industry would kiss the ground on which the government walked if we could get hold of that super cheap, super nutritious grain that is available at the present moment—nearly 100 million tonnes of it per year in the United States. We would not be on our knees in the cattle industry if it were not for the stupidity of the government with the live cattle exports decision. Even if that had not occurred, I still suspect that we would be in a hell of a lot of trouble. We would not be in that trouble if we had access to 10 or 20 million tonnes of this super cheap, super nutritious feed.

Finally, in the sugar industry, we were on \$270 a tonne—the world price—for 11 years up until about three or four years ago. In Brazil, 40 per cent of their sugar cane went into sugar. For that 40 per cent they were on \$270 a tonne, but for 60 per cent of their production they were on over \$400 a tonne—so they could cross-subsidise the sugar part of their industry from the ethanol part of their industry. Our sugar industry, our cattle industry and our grain industry would be fixed up, on the experience of what has happened in other countries, if we had this.

The driving imperative in the other countries is pollution. The reason that China, India and Japan have all announced now that they are moving to biofuels is the issue of pollution and of deaths, mainly from particulate but also from carcinogens—I think there are 15 or 20 carcinogens in conventional petrol. Of course, the ultimate argument, as Larry Johnson the father of ethanol in the United States said is that, when you pour petrol into the river, fish die; when you pour ethanol into the river, fish smile. It is pure alcohol.

I conclude on that note. I recommend this bill to the House and say it is a disgrace that the only country on earth now that does not have ethanol is our country. It is a reflection upon every single person in this place that refuses to vote for this bill. I commend the bill and the resolution to the House.