

# Report of the Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce

## Evidence

Wednesday, November 18, 1970.

The Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce to which was referred Bill S-5, intitled: "An Act respecting weights and measures", has in obedience to the order of reference of November 10, 1970, examined the said Bill and now reports the same with the following amendment:

Page 4: Strike out lines 8 to 12, inclusive, and substitute therefor the following:

- "(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Governor in Council may not amend Schedule II in such a manner that
- (a) the ratio of any one unit of measurement to any other unit of measurement is altered; or
  - (b) Canadian units of measurement are not authorized for use in trade."

Respectfully submitted.

Salter A. Hayden,  
Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I have a very honourable Senator Lang's statement, it is impossible really to add very much to what he said in moving second reading of the bill, because he gave such a very complete and full statement at that time.

Senator Connolly (Ontario West): We will tell him about that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Bedford: Thank you, Senator Connolly. I presume honourable senators have read that very full and complete statement and that, therefore, there is not really much that I need repeat this morning. If I may just recapitulate the real principles of the bill. The purpose of the bill here this morning is really to update the existing Weights and Measures and Units of Measurement Act, which have been in force since 1901. This updating is necessary for several reasons. First, it will permit the regulation of new types of devices and new practices in the weighing and measuring field that are not presently covered by existing legislation such as coin-operated liquid-dispensing machines which are something new since the last act, and machines such as drivers or machines that are selling things on the basis of time, again which were not covered by the existing legislation.

The Chairman: I suppose you are referring to such things as handometers.

Hon. Mr. Bedford: The situation where someone is buying something on time—for instance, where you get in a quarter for so much time, and it was that time of service which was not provided for in the old legislation.

Secondly, it will allow for the present inspections at fixed periods to be replaced by more efficient inspection programs based on well-tested statistical sampling techniques. That is to say, Mr. Chairman, now under the legislation we have to go around every so many years and inspect every device. We had on the advice of consultants and engineers that with the improvements in measuring devices and weighing devices, this can be done on a sampling basis and a statistical basis at a saving of expenses and cost and yet still give protection to the commercial community.

Thirdly, it will help to prevent fraudulent or undesirable practices connected with the delivery of fuel oil and odometers on automobiles. We will get into these matters later, sections 28 and 29.

Fourthly, it will strengthen the enforcement with respect to net weight or net weighed goods. That is to say, it will permit sampling of goods at the factory level where there are large quantities of the net until corrective action was required rather than having to wait until the goods reached the retail level. The bill, as Senator Lang explained, is complementary to the consumer packaging and labeling act which was introduced recently in the House of Commons. The provisions of the weights and measures act will apply to all levels of trade, though it may be that the consumer bill is intended above all to protect the interests of Canadian consumers. But I emphasize that the original bill is designed to ensure that in the market you get true measure whenever one purchases by weight, by volume, by length, by area or by time.

While the packaging and labeling act, which will come, of course, to the fore when it has passed the House of Commons, is concerned principally with the consumer, the Weights and Measures Act and the Units of Measure Act which is contained with it are concerned with the measurement of commodities for all purposes of trade, so that no matter what country is trading in, they can with safety rely on the fact that a pound is a pound or a yard is a yard. The bill really, as stated, is an offence to give short weight or measure and it provides for the proper use of scales and other measuring devices.

For example, before any type of scale or any measuring device can be used in Canada for trade, it must have been tested and approved by the Standards Branch of my Department in the laboratory we have here in Ottawa. It must be so constructed as to measure accurately and be likely to maintain its accuracy under normal use.

Finally, the bill sets forth the permissible units of measurement for trade use in Canada. It defines the basis