

Mr. BLAKE. I think the hon. gentleman had better not include in the operation of the clause goods for exportation without careful consideration. It would no doubt increase the price of the goods, and as long as the foreign country to which they are sent does not complain, perhaps we had better leave the export trade as free as we can; not that we want to send out false weights, but if there is no weight marked on the cans at all, we had better leave the municipal legislation in the foreign country to regulate the matter.

Mr. COSTIGAN. The clause might be amended by adding the words, "not to affect such goods for exportation."

Mr. BLAKE. There is just this point that occurs to me at the moment. If there is to be a very minute weighing, it may add considerably to the cost of the article. In the case of many of these hermetically sealed goods I believe it is quite impossible to fill the vessel quite full. The goods are boiled, and a vacuum is created on their cooling. It is impossible, I suppose, to arrange with mathematical accuracy for the precise amount of vacant space. It may, therefore, be impossible to predict the precise weight, to ounces or fractions of ounces, the quantity these small vessels would contain, and unless some margin of an ounce or two were left, the cost of the goods might be increased.

Mr. SPROULE. These goods are usually put up in half pound and pound cans, and so on; and are bought as so many half pound or pound or four pound cans. As they are put up now, they are put up on that principle and are supposed to contain a definite quantity. It would be an advantage to the public to know that they were guaranteed the amount in the can when they bought it for a certain weight.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I should be sorry to see any alterations in this clause which would render it inapplicable to the export trade. The alteration proposed is simply this, that we should insist on full and correct measure being given to our own people, but be free, if so inclined, to injure the foreign purchaser. The effect of such a course is evident from the English trade with China, where English goods have been almost driven out of the market in consequence of the untrue, to use the least offensive word, marks on goods to China.

Mr. DAVIES. There is not much danger of fraud in this matter. In the articles of lobster and canned goods, the cans are made of certain sizes supposed to hold one pound or two pounds, or other definite weight, and it is in the interest of the manufacturer himself that the cans should be filled up, because they are put into a boiler and boiled, having a safety valve for the steam to escape, and are afterwards hermetically sealed, so that the manufacturers cannot half fill the can. If this section be enacted, you cannot have a regular stamp to put on the cans because some cans will weigh an ounce more or less than others, and each can, therefore, will have to be weighed and stamped. I do not think the hon. member can give any instance of fraud having been committed with respect to these canned meats, lobster or salmon. The manufacturers are compelled to fill the can right up before boiling, and the cans are marked approximately, as near the weight as possible.

Mr. HALL. Although the motion in amendment is not originally my own, I can state there is great abuse in this respect, certainly as regards canned vegetables which are palmed on the public as half pound or pound tins and often contain very much less than the professed quantity. There can be no difficulty about the amendment. It will only oblige parties canning these goods to exercise more caution in filling the cans, and it is better the cans should be in excess of the weight, and the price raised, than that the public should be compelled to take them at much less than their professed weight. The material is comparatively

inexpensive, particularly in the case of vegetables, and the manufacturers will only be put to the trouble of making certain that the quantity that they put in will, after evaporation takes place, give the full weight.

Mr. COSTIGAN. I do not think there will be much difficulty in carrying this out. It will be easy to ascertain the weight of the packages which are made of certain regular sizes, and the dealers in foreign markets will have more confidence in trading with this country when they know to a certainty they will receive the full measure as stamped on the packages.

Mr. DAVIES. I do not think the hon. gentleman can point to any case in which complaint was made in the foreign market that our fish or meats, shipped in hermetically sealed cans, were short in weight. I have had experience here and in London, and know that complaints have been made in regard to salmon, mackerel and lobsters, but I never heard any complaint of their being short in weight. I would suggest that as these complaints are limited to vegetables and fruits, this amendment should be confined to these articles. This canned fish and canned meat business is a ticklish one, already sufficiently handicapped, and if you add on anything which will make it more expensive, great dissatisfaction will be caused. This amendment calls for the exact weight, but it is impossible to get exact weight.

Mr. McLELAN. I have frequently heard complaints that fish exported was deficient in weight. In Nova Scotia that complaint is frequently heard from the foreign ports, and a remedy was adopted in a particular locality by appointing inspectors under the Act to strictly inspect all the fish exported, so that the exact weight marked on each barrel was contained in it. By that means, the standard was raised of the fish in the locality to which I refer. If we have the reputation now of keeping up the weights in cans, it is desirable that we should maintain that reputation and thus hold the market.

Mr. VAIL. There is a great difference between barrels of fish and canned fish. 200 lbs. put in a barrel can be easily weighed, but in case of canned goods a certain allowance must be made for the weight they will lose in the process of canning, and you cannot calculate the weight to a few ounces. Should this clause be enacted, our shippers of canned fish will be in a very different position from the American shippers with whom we have to compete, and a considerable time must elapse before the fact is established that our cans contain the amount professed.

Mr. WELDON. The salmon are put whole in barrels. Very few salmon will fill a barrel, and they are put in after being salted. With regard to the canned fish, we know that it is immediately after the fish are caught, and on the fishing grounds, that they put them in cans and hermetically seal them. The cans are all made during the winter, and they are made pretty nearly the size—one pound cans and two pound cans, and it would be utterly impossible to carry out the provision to make them the exact weight. I agree with my hon. friend from Prince Edward Island that the canning business is sufficiently handicapped without having this additional burden put upon it.

Mr. DAVIES. Strike out the word "exact." The definition of that would be down to the fraction of an ounce, and it is impossible in these large canning establishments to carry that out.

Mr. BLAKE. A man would not be safe if he put in more than the weight.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Make it "not less than."