

a very difficult subject to legislate about, as my hon. friend quite understands, but the object is to make a commencement, along what is considered to be the right line, for the protection of the consumer, to go as far as we possibly can, and make way gradually.

Mr. MORPHY: I do not see that there is much protection for the consumer in the language used here unless the minister protests against the use of water or other preservatives. For instance, one may have fifty per cent tomato and fifty per cent water. It is not fair to the public that they should be forced to buy water, although it is expensive enough in this city. Now the ramifications of the law extend over the whole country, and it seems to me that the minister could insert in the Bill some such provision as this:

That such container shall have within it at least ninety per cent of solid material, free from all other liquids except the natural juice of the fruit or vegetable.

Or require in the case of canned fish and all other commodities "the necessary ingredients." Give the purchaser, who all over the country goes looking from day to day for food products, no cause for complaint. I do not know whether anybody in this House puts up shrimps, but a can of shrimps has vastly more water in it than a can of lobster or a can of salmon, either of which is perfectly dry. It may be that the shrimps must be preserved in some way by an inordinate quantity of water, but unless the public knows that, the tendency would be to suspect fraud in the putting up of the commodity. The proportion of liquid in such a case is entirely out of proportion to the size of the can, and I think there should be in the Bill some safeguard for the protection of the consumer. A person who buys by retail a can of this, or a can of that, suffers, and while it does not seem to that individual worth complaining about, the practice has within it the element of fraud. The whole country is suffering from it in a moderate way, and the producer of the goods is practically robbing the whole country to the extent of his trade. It does seem to me that there should be some settled quantity fixed, not only for fish, but for tomatoes, corn, peas, etc., and the phrase "net weight," to my mind, rather tends towards encouraging fraud than preventing it.

Net weight might mean three-quarters of the article, or three-quarters of water. I ask the minister to consider carefully putting something drastic in there to protect

the people when they are paying forty or fifty cents for a can of food, especially in these days when everything is so high. There is no reason why water within the container should take the value of the food article. I would like the minister to ask his officers if they cannot find some provision to insert there in fairness and equity to the consuming public.

Mr. BUREAU: Is it not already covered in the Bill by the term "net weight?"

Mr. MORPHY: I do not think it is. There is nothing to prevent the contents being half water. It is the weight of the contents of the container which is referred to. The minister has said that the only remedy, as I understand, if the public find there is three-quarters of water in any line of canned goods, is to quit buying those goods.

Mr. BUREAU: If water is not part of the food it should not be counted. But if the interpretation given to that section means that water is a part of the food, as in the case of the juice of the tomato, why not force the packer to put the exact contents of the package on the label, and if the exact contents are not as represented, then fine the packer?

Mr. FIELDING: It does provide for a fine, but it also specifies net weight of the contents.

Mr. BUREAU: Or of the food in the package?

Mr. FIELDING: That is debatable. It says "article or articles of food or other commodities in such container, and the net weight." Presumably that means net weight of the articles of food, but it leaves room for debate as to whether the liquid in the can is or is not part of the article of food. The object of this legislation is to protect the consumer, and we can sympathize with it. I think there is room for the criticism of my hon. friend from Perth (Mr. Morphy) respecting the term "net weight."

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: With reference to my hon. friend's suggestion that a system be adequately framed and put into universal practice which would be a scientific system, you would have to go back to a scientific analysis of the food packed. That is what my hon. friend suggests would rather be got at by regulation as to what were the proper ingredients to enter into a food as such, and a tabulation of those ingredients. I do not see, when we are trying to put through legislation to correct in part an evil which at