

ter is absolutely right in trying to standardize cement, because anybody with common sense knows that if a manufacturer of cement wished to palm off 86-pound bags as 87½ pounds, which is the prevailing standard, there is nothing to prevent his doing so. For that reason I think it is well that this legislation should pass. But I would suggest that the word "standard" be inserted, because that is used in legislation in other countries. When you buy sheet iron, standard gauge, for instance, you know exactly the gauge thickness you are going to get, and when you buy 1-inch bar iron standard gauge, you know it will be a standard inch, and the same applies to boiler plate, sheet iron, tin and everything of that description, which are all standardized now. There is, therefore, no reason why cement, which is an article of common, every-day use, especially by farmers who have no means of weighing it, or who do not generally know what quantity a bag should contain, should not have a standard assigned to it. I agree with the hon. member for Macdonald (Mr. Henders) in that respect. The consumer should be protected; the manufacturer can take care of himself. It has been argued that the weighing machine cannot take care of the weight. The machine will weigh these bags, if it is anything like the automatic weighing machines that I have seen in operation. Without a standard, manufacturers may be tempted to put their hand in the bag and palm off a smaller quantity of cement, just as a hen will turn out a light-weight egg and ask the same money for it. Insert the word "standard," then if a man does not specify a standard bag or barrel of cement, and gets a light weight package, the manufacturer can say: "you did not ask for a standard bag or barrel." I hope the minister will see his way clear to accept my suggestion.

Mr. BUREAU: I understand that there is no complaint about the way things are being carried on with the present standard of 87½ pounds. The proposed change will be rather confusing. The minister says that cement shall be sold by weight, 94 pounds to the bag and four bags to the barrel. If we are going to wrangle over it, why not drop the clause. We are told that these are war times. We on this side do not want to be accused of bringing war into Parliament for the sake of a few pounds weight in a bag of cement. I would not object to dropping these clauses, or in fact of dropping the Bill. We have already

[Mr. Currie.]

dropped several sections under various pretexts and I would suggest that the law be left as it stands, as both consumers and manufacturers seem to be perfectly satisfied with it.

Mr. CASSELMAN: Before the clause passes, I wish to protest again that this is a retrograde move. It is making a complicated system in what is now a simple system of handling cement. I agree with the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. Currie) that there should be a standard weight for a bag of cement. There is a standard weight of 87½ pounds, which has been the weight of a bag of cement ever since cement was manufactured in Canada. If the minister can offer one single reason why that weight should be changed to 94 pounds, other than that our bag should weigh the same as that in the United States, I may change my mind. The minister gave such a reason for the Daylight Savings Bill. I can see a reason why our time should be the same as that of our neighbours across the line, and I agreed with him. But I do not know why we should change the weight of a bag of cement in Canada because our American cousins have a larger bag, particularly when the tendency there is to decrease rather than to increase the size of the bag. We have a standard now—

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: It is a standard of custom.

Mr. CASSELMAN: Yes.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: But we have no legal standard.

Mr. CASSELMAN: Then make it 87½ pounds as it has always been, and stamp the bag. If you cannot have uniformity in the weight of each bag, this is what will happen: When a carload of cement is shipped to a dealer—and most of the cement goes through the hands of dealers—he will have to weigh that whole carload to see that he is getting his correct weight. Then he puts it in his warehouse, and as he sells it out to consumers he will again have to weigh it. The custom now is to load on twenty-five or thirty bags; you sell cement by count. The Bill makes a complicated affair out of what is a simple affair; and, further, there is not one single clause in it which will remedy any real evil. During this time we should not have legislation of this kind, and I would suggest to the minister that he withdraw the whole Bill, and we can consider it next year perhaps when we have more time.