

thought to be a better custodian of the yard than the Speaker of this House, and I am not sure what reason—

**Mr. Baldwin:** Are you talking about King Henry VIII?

**Mr. Basford:** We have not got to him yet. The customary foot-pound units with which we are all familiar and the metric units will remain valid for use in Canada under this bill. I do want to assure hon. members, because there were some press reports which came out when the bill was before the Senate, that may leave the wrong impression, that the usual or official foot-pound and Canadian units we are used to cannot be curtailed without specific reference back to Parliament. There was a suggestion that this bill forced the introduction of the metric system. That is not so at all. It makes the use of the metric system legal in Canada, but it also retains the customary Canadian units which cannot be taken away without an act of Parliament.

• (4:10 p.m.)

The fundamental principle of the bill is that it makes it an offence to give short weight or measure. It provides that scales or any other type of measuring device to be used in trade must be of a type which has been tested and approved by the standards branch of my department. Certain devices now widely used in trade, such as parking meters and coin operated liquid dispensing machines, were not in general use when the last Weights and Measures Act was passed, but will be brought within the ambit of the act so as to permit us to ensure that these new devices give a fair and just measure.

In the past few years fraudulent practices connected with fuel oil deliveries and with odometers on automobiles have come to light, and this legislation, as it is being revised, will permit us to control those practices. The bill will also enable us to modernize our inspection program, using more sophisticated sampling techniques. Periods of equipment inspection will be set corresponding to the demonstrated need for testing based on a modernized statistical analysis of inspection data. The details of these features will, I am sure, be studied in great depth in detail in the Committee on Health and Welfare if this bill is referred to the committee.

This bill is closely related to, but quite distinct from, the packaging and labelling bill C-180 which I mentioned earlier. The latter bill is concerned primarily with pre-packaged goods which are clearly identifiable as consumer goods. The packaging and labelling act is designed to establish the information about a consumer product that must be on a label or package, including a clear expression of the weight or volume of that consumer product. On the other hand, the weights and measures bill that is before the House covers the devices used in determining the weight or volume of all goods used in trade. It covers goods which are not prepackaged and are not covered by other legislation but are weighed or measured in stores, such as yard goods or fresh fish. It also covers goods which are sold at the non-retail level to wholesalers or to contractors or to others who buy in bulk supply. In other words, this bill is designed to protect the purchaser

#### *Weights and Measures Act*

at every link in the chain from the producer of raw materials, to the retailer, and ultimately to the consumer, to ensure that they all receive full and just measure.

With that brief introduction, I move the motion that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs where, I am sure, the bill will be studied with great care by hon. members.

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** We will not say too much at this stage, although we will make sure that when this bill gets into committee it will be thoroughly and closely examined. I was glad to see that, unlike the last bill, the minister did not suggest that this be known as weights and measures Canada. At least he is going to draw the line somewhere. I see the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) here. The reason I mention that fact is I have heard his department and that of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang) will be put together and will be henceforth known as Unemployment Canada. But we will wait for that.

The bill gives, of course, a great deal of power to the minister. It used to be said many years ago that the sun never set on the British Empire. I am not faulting the minister because ambition is a great thing to have, and I am glad to see young men with laudable ambition. But it will not be too long before we will be able to say that in Canada the sun never sets on the empire of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford).

**Mr. Basford:** And with my head, it sure shines.

**Mr. Baldwin:** From toys to consumers, he does not miss a thing in between. I remember him from the days when he was a struggling but very effective chairman of a committee which was inquiring into these matters. From that small start, this great monolithic empire has been built. We will continue to watch the minister with exceeding interest because of this fact.

As the minister said, this bill has to be read in conjunction with the packaging and labelling bill. There are a few aspects in the bill with which I will deal. First, there is the very wide power of regulation that allows the Governor in Council to regulate exemptions, conditionally or unconditionally, from the application of the bill. This is all set out in clause 10. I will not go into the clause except to point out that it is a clause of almost two and a half pages with about 22 or 23 different provisions. It points up an objection which I have been making in this House, supported by my party, that over and over again we have a government which enacts enabling legislation—and this is little more than enabling legislation—and asks the House to give it very substantial grants of authority to act by way of regulation.

I do not think there is any doubt that 90 per cent of the acts and actions of this government which affect the lives, fortunes and property of the ordinary people in Canada come about as a result of regulation, order in council, or ministerial decree. I have spent three or four years crusading on this, and last year we got through an excellent report of an all party committee recommending