

*Competition Bill*

**Mr. Baker:** Let's have no double-talk on double-ticketing.

**Mr. Cullen:** I am trying to give a straight answer, which it seems to me might be difficult as the questions are so crooked I have to go around corners to get at them. Prohibition of double-ticketing might be extremely difficult to enforce.

**An hon. Member:** Well, isn't that great.

**Mr. Cullen:** You had better let me finish before you fall into another trap. The hon. member has probably read as many, if not more, newspapers as I have. After all, members in the opposition have more time to read than we do, because we are busy working. In any event, I read the newspaper article which pointed out one of the difficulties of the double-ticketing system. When a price is put on an item it is extremely easy to get a dark red, black or blue ink pen, strike out that price and put on another one. There will be some difficulty in enforcing that particular provision, but I think businessmen in the marketplace across Canada are on their guard and know that we will be looking at this matter.

I might point out that there are scientific ways of determining whether one, two or three prices have been put on a particular item. I am not suggesting it is not going to be difficult to enforce, just as many provisions of the Criminal Code are difficult to enforce, or even to lay a charge under, to say nothing of proving it. No one is suggesting that this bill is a panacea, and I hope there will be some amendments forthcoming. The hon. member, who is well respected—we are complimenting each other tonight—contributed a great deal to the deliberations of the committee, but sometimes when he gets before the cameras he has a tendency to suggest that the government has not followed all the committee's recommendations. I suggest he is confusing the issue by doing that. The government may not have followed all the recommendations of the Conservative Party, but it certainly followed the recommendations of the committee.

The committee recommended the establishment of a Food Prices Review Board. Such a board has been established and significant action has been taken. Only this afternoon we heard about some of the splendid actions taken by this board. The committee also recommended that money be made available to consumer associations so they could go into various areas they could not go into before and conduct more efficient examinations. I understand the minister is increasing that amount this year by something like \$100,000.

I should point out that all the recommendations of the committee were not directed to the federal government. Some of its recommendations were directed to the media, and I think the media have fulfilled what we asked them to do. For instance, we now have the program *The Market Place* in prime time and we have a tremendous amount of newspaper advertising. Everyone has the responsibility to follow these recommendations. We have heard the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) indicate that if any province wants to embark on a private program in this respect, funds from the Canada Assistance Plan will be made available. Initiatives have to be taken at

[Mr. Cullen.]

every level of government. *Carte blanche*, sweeping criticism does not really tell the whole story.

In any event, I do not like to labour the obvious by referring to a bill that really speaks for itself. I suggest that a careful reading of it will indicate exactly what it does to protect the small businessman and the consumer.

**Mr. McGrath:** Would the hon. member permit another question?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger):** Is the hon. member agreeable to accepting another question?

**Mr. Cullen:** Yes.

**Mr. McGrath:** Since the hon. member did not use up all his time, I should like to ask him what happened to the amendments to the *Weights and Measures Act* passed by this House almost three years ago. Where is the consumer protection, based on that bill? Why did it take over three years to implement the packaging and labelling legislation, which I suggest will not become law in most cases for two years?

**Mr. Cullen:** When I am called upon to justify the weights and measures legislation, I will be only too happy to do so. It has been my experience around here that when something takes a little longer than the layman might think it should take, it is because of careful examination and discussion between industry, the department and the minister. An investigation would soon reveal that there are very good reasons for taking time in most cases. The government does not want to hurt the businessman who is to be affected by the legislation. Businessmen have done nothing wrong and want to comply with the law. I think the Canadian businessman should be given sufficient time to effect a change in practice in order to live up to the new legislation. We should try to avoid anything that would cause hardship to a particular businessman. Usually changes involve some expenditure on the part of businesses because they must replace their present packaging systems with another. These people should be allowed to continue their normal business unless they are violating the provisions of an act or its regulations.

**Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest, as I always do, to the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen) who caused me some consternation when he said the legislation had been widely welcomed by various hon. members and communities. I wondered for a moment whether I was listening to the right debate. However, when he said that when the minister introduced the bill he did not exactly jump up and down with enthusiasm, I knew I was in the right place at the right time. He indicated, as well, a slow, careful and cautious approach. I did not understand whether he meant to the legislation or in the legislation. If he meant a slow, careful, cautious approach to the legislation, I welcome his words and hasten to agree with him.

I had intended during this debate to deal with only one small aspect of the bill which is of considerable concern to me and others, but I am forced by the words of the minister who urged speedy passage of the bill to answer to some degree. Speaking personally, I would be quite con-