

Home Canning

Mrs. Campagnolo: In May of 1975, the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs found that there was an uneven distribution, and the department worked to see that this was made much more equitable across the country. However, even as the production was increased and made adequate to fill all the distributors' orders—one may assume that local distributors have a good indication of required supplies, in view of their close contacts with wholesalers and retailers in the local areas—the distributors' orders were based on sales requests from retailers.

Furthermore, in the case of Anchor Cap and Closure, the firm's first priority has been in filling orders from the glass-jar companies who market their jars complete with fittings, that is, the jar with the top in a total kit. The Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs then again contacted the two major Canadian producers of glass preserving jars, Dominion Glass in Montreal and Consumer Glass in Toronto, and was told that Dominion Glass produced approximately 50 per cent more glass jars in 1975 than it did the previous year. It purchased lids from both Anchor and Bernadin, and the availability of these lids has been a limiting factor in the production increase for jars. Consumer Glass obtains lids from Anchor and took steps to catch up on its production schedule, which was delayed as a result of a 13-week strike in its plant at Lavington, B.C., in 1975.

An additional factor which has contributed to a shortage is brand loyalty, particularly in B.C. where consumers have traditionally used Kerr Products, and to a lesser degree, Ball wide-mouth fittings. Consumers are aware that lids made by different manufacturers are interchangeable, but generally remain, if at all possible, with their favourite brand name. The Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs once again advertised to make sure that people were aware of the fact that they could use other types of jar fittings for their favourite types of jars, and advised that by following the instructions on the box they could be assured of excellent results because canning procedures vary sometimes with different brands.

The two American manufacturers of jars and jar fittings, Kerr Glass Manufacturing Corporation and Ball Corporation, have traditionally been major suppliers for the B.C. market. Representation was therefore made to these companies in June of 1975 for updated information as to supplies for British Columbia. The figures from Kerr Glass indicated a 27.5 per cent increase in supplies over 1974 with heavier shipments of lids in the wide-mouth size. It is estimated that Kerr had traditionally supplied approximately 70 per cent of the B.C. market prior to 1974. Figures provided by the Ball Corporation indicated that there was approximately a 34 per cent increase in supplies to B.C. in that year. Production and distribution of fittings by all manufacturers continued throughout last year's canning season. Supplies were shipped to various regions of Canada, and as they came off the production line many of them headed for British Columbia. This ensured to the maximum extent possible a continuity of supply which built up to a peak at the height of the canning season.

Jar lids and jar finishes—mouths—are manufactured in four sizes: 63 millimetres; 70 millimetres, which is standard; 78 millimetres and 86 millimetres, which is the wide-mouth size and which is generally favoured by canners

[Mr. Paproski.]

across Canada. The figures show that more lids were shipped to British Columbia than to any other part of Canada in that year. As I told hon. members, there are two domestic suppliers in Canada, Bernadin of Toronto and Anchor Cap and Closure Limited, also of that city. From the United States there are supplies from Kerr Glass Manufacturing Company, of Oklahoma, and the Ball Corporation of Indiana. There are two companies in Taiwan which in the past have supplied our market as well, until last year when a major supermarket had to recall one of the Taiwan brands due to imperfections in its manufacture which might possibly have led to botulism if used. However, the other brand is perfectly suitable for use and it continues on the North American market at this time.

The problem is one of distribution rather than supply, and I should like once again to commend the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay for bringing this to our attention. I know that in my own area canning is not a forgotten art. It has not given way to the freezer. Naturally, coming from northern British Columbia I know that the product which is canned most often is the seafood of the west coast—salmon. In Canada there are many difficulties in canning salmon. Proper fittings on jars are imperative so that there will not be any possibility of botulism resulting. I think we can safely say that this has been investigated to a large degree and that the facts and figures are before us and are irrefutable. In my area I was perplexed to see in a small store in Iskut, on the Stewart-Cassiar highway, a huge supply of current, wide-mouth Mason jar lids. The store manager said there must have been some kind of mistake because the lids had arrived almost unbidden. He had only wanted one or two cases, but had received many more. Fortunately it was possible to arrange for them to go where they could be better utilized.

● (1710)

While those around me are laughing at the possibility of being involved nationally with canning lids, I would remind them that it is not amusing when people in Canada strive to make good use of the fruit and vegetables they grow. Where the hon. member makes his home, he has access to all sorts of fruit and vegetables and this is the kind of thing our society is going to have to spend more time on. If the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is going to be able to get prices high enough for farmers, we are going to have to do some of the work ourselves.

I suggest the canning industry is not going to be able to keep up unless they have a full supply of lids. The manufacturers of jar lids are to be commended for rising to the occasion and making certain that people have access to the products they want. Our Canadian ingenuity is such that we should be able to manufacture Canadian products and not have to look for them abroad in sufficient quantity to supply our own people.

I appreciate this motion very much and look forward to seeing no hazard in this year's canning season as we approach it. I think we begin somewhat earlier on the northwest coast of British Columbia. We are almost into the canning season now, and I have not had one letter of complaint from any constituent saying that not enough lids are available. I believe I can safely say there are sufficient lids to meet the demand at this time. We look forward to a canning season that will have sufficient