

The prohibition of the use of quantity descriptive words such as "giant", "big", and "jumbo" in the net weight declaration. "Big gallon" or "jumbo quart", for example, would not be acceptable.

The prohibition of "cents-off" legends as an integral part of a package's label.

The prohibition of deceptive pictures on packages.

The establishment of reasonable standards of weight or size—the use of such odd sizes as the 13-3/7 ounce package of dry cereal, for example, would be outlawed.

The prohibition of sizes, shapes, or dimensional proportions which may deceive consumers—the bigger pack.

This all boils down to the fact that the package shall not bear false witness. It has been a long time since the consumers of this country have had a fair shake. The farmers have their organizations; the labourers have their organizations; the manufacturers have their organizations; the retailers have their organizations and the banks have their organizations. With the establishment of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, we now have a government department with the responsibility of protecting the interests of the consumer.

With the passage of this bill the minister would have the legal right to do many of those things we intended when we approved the legislation establishing his department.

Mr. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-21, now under discussion, deals with a statute which has been around for 15 years, and to my knowledge has not been amended since that time. In view of modern technology in respect of prices and packaging, sales of products are now being made by package advertising rather than by direct advertising. The traditional manner of selling has changed. At one time the customer went into the store, saw what he wanted to buy and made the selection, which was put into a package. Now one goes into the store, finds something already packaged, and purchases it in that form.

Women have problems because there is almost no way to make a meaningful judgment as to what is contained in a package. Advertising of prices, quality and quantity has little or no meaning. As an example, one could take the pre-mixed cake packages. One cake mix may be a pound and a half and another may be one pound. Both may contain the proper amount and weight of ingredients to produce a cake of the specified size.

• (5:20 p.m.)

So when you come to the regulation of weights and measures, there is not only the

Weights and Measures Act

question of getting accurate, meaningful measurements on the package but also consideration of the use to which the ingredients can be put. It is not the simplest thing in the world to evolve a policy or a series of policies which will make this obvious to all. When dealing with the question of weights and measures, we also have to consider the related problem of quality, which varies considerably and which to some extent this bill does not take into consideration. I use this not as an argument against the bill but merely to point out the complexity of the undertaking when you are dealing with this very important subject matter.

The other aspect to which I should like to refer before going into other considerations is the constitutional question. I understand from the remarks made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) that much of what is in this bill has been based on a truth in packaging bill presented in the United States Senate by Senator Hart. There have been a large number of hearings held on this bill. I might say to the hon. member for Winnipeg North that these hearings have been fully covered in the consumer reports to which I subscribe.

I find these consumer reports very interesting and useful publications. It is a pity that, in many cases, the private brands we have in Canada, such as those of Eaton's, for example, are not fully covered and sometimes the model numbers we have are a year behind those in the United States. As a result, it requires a great deal of homework if one is to use these publications properly. Nevertheless the senate hearings have been reasonably well covered in this excellent publication.

The difficulty we have in Canada in attempting to bring forth similar legislation revolves around the fact that at the moment we do not have, nor are we likely to have, the power to cover the whole area in the way that can be done under a different jurisdictional set-up, such as the United States. Repugnant as it may be, therefore, it is necessary for us in Canada at the federal level to proceed step by step without having any over-all co-ordinated plan, because we do not have the power in all areas. If we are going to be successful, therefore, and provide legitimate protection for the consumer, the new Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will have to engage in an ever increasing number of conferences with the provinces in order to work out proper programs. Only in this way will legislation at the