

not really consider it a serious problem. But it is a very, very serious problem in western Canada. There is a shortage now of jar lids for canning, of wide mouth Mason jar lids and also of other types of jar lids.

● (2220)

The minister suggested in his answer to me that I was new to this problem and that is why I did not know what was going on. I remind him that I was the first one to bring this problem before the House of Commons. On July 19, 1974, I wrote letters to the then minister of consumer and corporate affairs, to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie).

When answering the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said that the problem was that the B.C. manufacturer faced a strike. I say that there is no manufacturer of lids in British Columbia or in western Canada. Yes, there is a manufacturer of jars, jars for which you use these kinds of lids. There is such a manufacturer in western Canada, but the plant was on strike. The consumer, the housewife, the person who uses these lids, may have an ample supply of jars and may not want any more. People like that want lids for the jars they now have. That is why I say that the minister should take this question seriously. He does not seem to understand it; in any case, he is not present tonight, again, and so will not find out what this debate is all about and understand the problem.

It is about time this government and the minister took an interest in western Canada and in what is going on; because there is no shortage of lids in eastern Canada does not mean that we, in western Canada, are to be forgotten. There is no manufacturer in western Canada. The manufacturers are in eastern Canada and the United States. The problem is national and international. It is not a problem for the British Columbia government. The minister can say all he wants about this being a problem for the government in B.C. It is not their problem. The problem has to be dealt with by the federal government because it is a national problem. We have manufacturers in eastern Canada, and they have to ship to western Canada. The problem is international, as well, because supplies for western Canada for the last number of years have been coming from the United States. When there is a shortage of tin plate in the United States, manufacturers there do not ship to western Canada. They keep their supplies at home, as is only natural.

We have been telling this government for the last few years that we must become self-sufficient in Canada, but what happened? The manufacturers of eastern Canada could not ship last year to western Canada because they had not shipped for a number of years and their quotas of tin plate were based on the quantities they had been getting for the past three years. That meant that they did not have a large enough quota of tin plate in order to manufacture lids for western Canada. If we are to have sufficient supplies of jar lids manufactured in Canada, the government must take an interest and make sure that manufacturers get more tinplate than they got under the quotas of the past three years. They should get enough tinplate to build up supplies in western Canada and supplies in eastern Canada.

Adjournment Motion

The government must also make sure that after manufacturers in eastern Canada manufacture these jar lids and send them to western Canada someone does not come in all of a sudden from the United States with lower priced lids and kick our eastern manufacturers out of the market. This could happen easily if there is an over-supply of tinplate.

What is going to happen to western Canada is this: if there are not good supplies of tinplate, manufacturers will not send supplies of lids to western Canada. So the problem is national and international. It is very serious and has to be attacked and solved by the federal government, not by the government of British Columbia or by any other government in western Canada.

This question has to be taken seriously by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Let us not have the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who comes from eastern Canada, giving us a lot of malarkey and silly answers to our questions. When we ask these questions, we want him to be serious about this problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has now expired.

Mr. Charles Turner (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the issue raised by the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary (Mr. Whittaker), the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Lee) and the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt). As hon. members know, there were a number of factors which contributed to the shortage of canning lids in 1974. These included shortages in base materials for manufacturers of the products, insufficiency of Canadian supply to meet demand, and a vastly increased demand on the part of consumers which was brought about by the increases in food and produce costs and resulted in decisions being taken by homemakers everywhere to "put up" home grown produce.

The government has continued to be concerned about the situation and has, as the minister indicated in his reply to the question by the hon. member on June 2, 1975, through officials of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs had on-going discussions with Canadian manufacturers to encourage them to increase their production to meet demand, particularly in British Columbia and other parts of western Canada. A very close watch has also been kept on the American situation since part of the supply of home canning lids is manufactured in the United States. Hon. members are aware of some of these initiatives and they do not have to be repeated here.

As recently as Friday of last week, officials of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs met with Canadian manufacturers of home canning lids to receive up-dated information on the canning lid supply and to ensure that, so far as it is possible, there will be sufficient product supplied to Canadian consumers this year to meet demand.

I am informed that, as a result of the department keeping in very close contact with Canadian manufacturers, a