

Weights and Measures Act

headed by a minister, which has been done. The next recommendation is:

That immediate steps be taken to promote standardization and simplification of grades, nomenclature and packaging for commonly purchased consumer items.

I have had occasion, as I am sure other members of parliament and husbands and fathers have, of going with my wife or daughter to do the shopping. I suggest to hon. members that if one wants to shop on the basis of unit price—I am not saying that many people do, but there are those who do, and we should encourage it—he would have to carry with him a computer in order to be able to calculate the price per ounce, for example.

I did some comparative shopping recently and found a very popular peanut butter packaged in a 12-ounce jar and a one pound jar. The prices were of an odd nature and one would have to have a computer, as I say, to calculate which size was cheaper. I found mustard in a 6-ounce jar and a 16-ounce jar. I found ketchup in an 11 fluid ounce bottle, a 15-ounce bottle and a 20-ounce bottle. I found salmon in a 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce can and the next size was 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces. I do not know how anybody could calculate whether the larger size was a cheaper buy than the smaller.

I found canned corn in a 10-ounce size and a 15-ounce size. I found soups made by different manufacturers, one next to the other. One soup was in a 10 fluid ounce can, another in a 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ fluid ounce can and a third brand was in an 11 fluid ounce can. If one wanted to buy soup on the basis of which brand was cheaper per ounce, it would be impossible to do so by looking at the fluid content of the can.

● (5:10 p.m.)

I now come to the question of soaps. Hon. members know that probably more money is spent by the manufacturers of soap than anybody else in advertising and trying to convince us that one soap is better than another, that one soap will wash the clothes cheaper than another and one detergent will do a better job than any other product. Looking at these products, I defy any person, including a trained mathematician, to calculate which brand is cheaper by the ounce. Spic and Span comes in three sizes; 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces, 2.8 ounces and 4.6 ounces. Joy comes in similar sizes. Surf comes in various sizes. In addition to this we have experienced the practice of manufacturing companies printing on their labels that the product is being sold for 10

cents or 20 cents less than regular price. It is against the law in Canada for a manufacturer to direct a retailer to sell a product for any specific price, yet the manufacturer states on his package that the product is being sold for so many cents off regular price. These manufacturers do not have the right to do this. They do so, I am sure, in order to confuse the consumer. It is the retailer who decides the cost or selling price of a product.

Having regard to size, I suggest there is only one reason for this strange packaging practice, and that is to confuse the consumer. There is no other reason for the manufacturer or packager to put out these various sizes. I am satisfied that this bill would be of great assistance to the new minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Turner) in protecting the consumer. It would give the minister a tool with which he could persuade the manufacturer, processor or packager, to give some meaning to size information on labels. Nothing in this bill would create difficulty for manufacturers of these packaged products. It would require only that manufacturers or packagers use standard sizes, such as referred to by the consumers association report of 1962, to which I am referring.

It is obviously difficult for one manufacturer or packager to give the consumer a minimum sized product if his competitor has the authority to change the advertising in respect of size. That is the type of thing that is happening. The new Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will have the right under the law to set out clearly regulations in respect of packaging. This will lead to equitable requirements. I suggest that is what this bill is intended to do.

This bill was not drafted by me. It is based essentially on a similar bill introduced in the United States Senate by Senator Hart of Michigan, and which has the enthusiastic support of consumer organizations in the United States.

Let me close by summarizing what the bill now before this house will do. I am sure most hon. members are familiar with the issue of *Consumer Reports* for May, 1963. That issue summarizes what this bill will do, in that it stipulates the following requirements:

The statement of the net weight content on the front panel of a package.

The establishment of standards with respect to the location and prominence (size of type) of the net weight declaration.

[Mr. Orlikow.]