

Mr. MORPHY: A farmer comes in to get a bag of cement, and there are two kinds of bags. He does not know about the law making a bag of cement 94 pounds. Such a bag is sold at a certain price. A merchant, with a little quirk, or trick,—and there are some of that kind—sells a bag of cement and the farmer thinks he is getting a 94-pound when he is only getting an 87½ pound bag. Is it not a fact that the weight has been stamped on cement bags in the United States at 87½ pounds, and have they not been found in this country? If that be so, where does the difficulty come in? If they have done it once, they can do it again. I think it greatly in the interest of the public that the weight should be put upon a bag of cement, the same as it is put upon a bag of flour. The sacks are stamped with the number of pounds they contain. It is quite true that it may put a little more work on the manufacturer, but supposing it does, the public are assured of proper weights. Will not the minister look into this and ascertain if the weight is not stamped on the bags in the United States?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I do not think they are marked, but I am not certain about that. I will make enquiry, and let my hon. friend know before we pass the Bill.

Mr. PEDLOW: I would like to call attention to one feature of the discussion that has been referred to by the minister, and that is measuring and weighing. I happen to have had considerable experience in both. When done mechanically, measuring or weighing is much more accurate than when done by hand. When the human element enters, the result depends largely on the temperament of the individual at the time the operation is performed.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: To a certain extent I think my hon. friend (Mr. Pedlow) is right, but against that is the actual fact, borne out by the testimony of manufacturers and dealers in cement, and architects, that under the mechanical system of bagging cement you cannot get a uniform weight in each bag. Whether it is mechanical temperament or human temperament, it varies.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Has the minister consulted the manufacturers of cement on this question?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: Yes.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Do they approve of this change?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: Some of them do. The whole of the opposition offered by the manufacturers of cement has been based on the idea that they would be subjected to loss and particularly to loss in bags. I beg to assure my hon. friend that under this legislation the bags are not a loss in any way. The bags may hold 94 pounds, or they may not hold quite 94 pounds; or they may hold 100 pounds, yet the bags can be used until they are used up. I am told that a very large proportion of the bags in use will hold sufficient to reach the 94-pound standard.

Mr. ROBB: The minister has argued at considerable length in support of the view that cement, being bagged mechanically, the manufacturers were unable to insure a uniform weight, and that therefore it would not be fair to impose a fine, and I understand that the provision for a fine has been eliminated. Before six o'clock, in the very same Bill, the minister passed certain clauses providing that food products be stamped with the name of the packer and the net weight, and he provided for a fine if the weight was not as indicated on the package. I am sure the minister knows that most of these food products are packed in identically the same way as cement, by machinery, and if it is wrong to impose a fine on the manufacturers of cement, what justification has he for imposing a fine on those who put up foodstuffs, putting them up in the same way and with identically the same machinery? This automatic machinery is probably made in the same factory as that in which they make scales for weighing cement. The minister could not have been right this afternoon and also right now. He was either right then, and wrong now, or he is right now and he was wrong this afternoon.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I do not think that follows at all. I might be right this afternoon and right now. My hon. friend has had an experience of that kind, I am sure.

Mr. ROBB: What explanation has the minister for this discrimination between those who put up foodstuffs and those who put up cement?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: The only explanation I have is the difference in the method of bagging and in the machinery. You have machinery arranged for mechanical work along certain lines which acts just as definitely and certainly as the human hand and even with less fallibility, but