

Home Canning

seem to me that if there are sales available the manufacturers will make every effort to fulfil the demand. As indicated by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway, I think they are attempting to do just that at the present moment.

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Madam Speaker, in doing a little research on this subject I uncovered a piece of information that is of great interest to myself in that it has reference to my own home town. Looking into the whole subject of glass production for bottling and so on I discovered that the very first Canadian glass factory was built in 1847 in a location called Ottawa. The company was christened the Ottawa Glass Works in 1848. It built beautiful specimens of all types of glass which were being advertised in Montreal in late 1848.

An advertisement appearing in 1850 refers to the manufacture of items ranging from door knobs to mirrors, and from lamp chimneys to ginger beer bottles. I have a copy of an advertisement placed by the Ottawa Glass Works in the *Montreal Herald* and *Daily Commercial Gazette* on November 14, 1850. It referred to all kinds of hollow ware including apothecary bottles, vials, tubes, mineral bottles, etc.

In 1864 the owner of this glass factory was George Matthews. When a new post office was established to serve this glass-making community it was called Hudson, the maiden name of Matthews' wife, and the name remains to this day. The interesting point is that I come from the town of Hudson, which used to be Ottawa, and was changed to Hudson; and now this town in which I am speaking, formerly Bytown, is called Ottawa.

The glass industry of Vaudreuil was the earliest sustained attempt to manufacture and market Canadian made glass on a large scale. However, that is a matter of history, as well expounded by those hon. members whose constituencies are most affected by the scarcity in certain areas of the country.

The government has been very concerned about the difficulties experienced by Canadian consumers last summer—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I have been listening to the hon. member and am wondering if he realizes that the motion refers to a severe shortage of lids and jars. Perhaps the hon. member is about to come to that point.

Mr. Herbert: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was leading up to that subject, but since you have raised the point, quite frankly the reason for my research was that I had never heard, I suppose, being an easterner, of a Mason jar. I tried to find out what it was, but must admit that the combined resources of the House of Commons research staff were not able to come up with an answer. I presume this is a product sufficiently well known to the previous speakers, and I should get back to the point, namely, that last summer Canadian consumers were experiencing difficulties in obtaining the necessary fittings for jars used in home canning.

Housewives, were forced at that time to curtail and, in some cases, abandon their preserving of fruits and vegetables due to the shortage. While it was not possible to

ease the supply problem for the 1974 canning season, the government is doing everything it can to ensure that this serious problem does not occur again.

A review of the events that transpired last summer concerning the shortage of jar lids and the reason contributing to the shortage would, perhaps, put this situation into perspective.

It became apparent during the canning season in the summer of 1974 that there were not sufficient jar lids to meet consumer demand. Consumers who were faced with increasing commodity prices, in an effort to economize had turned more and more to home canning. This, in turn, produced a vastly increased demand for the canning lids.

At the same time, tinplate, the major component of the lids, was in very short supply throughout the North American continent. For this reason supplies were being allocated to manufacturers on the basis of their previous years' purchases. Additional quantities of materials were not available to them from their regular suppliers.

In order to plan 1974 production lines, companies had forecast 1974 sales late in 1973. These forecasts were based on 1973 figures, plus an anticipated increase. Their production based on these projections, unfortunately, turned out to be completely inadequate to supply the unprecedented demand.

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Under normal circumstances distributors project sales for the coming year, and production schedules are based on those predictions, so that large inventories of a seasonal item will not remain at the end of a season. Should the anticipated increase be, for example, 20 per cent, and consumer demands materialize at 50 to 60 per cent, by the time those demands are really known it is too late to go back into production. This is the situation that occurred last year.

Complaints flowed in from consumers who had purchased or grown quantities of fruits and vegetables specifically for canning only to find they were unable to buy the necessary fittings. Because of the concern expressed by consumers and because of some statements being carried in the media, inquiries were made into the situation to determine what, in fact, had happened and what might be done to resolve the matter.

The vast majority of the complaints received were from British Columbia. And here there was an additional factor to consider. There are a number of sizes of jars and lids. Traditionally the west seems to show a preference for the wide-mouthed jars while the east uses a smaller size. The wide-mouthed jar requires a heavier gauge of tin plate which was not as readily available as regular gauge. This put a further pressure on already tight supplies.

The problem did not suffer from lack of attention. At the federal level the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and the Food Prices Review Board, as well as some individual members of parliament, were pursuing it with the companies concerned.

It was apparent from these discussions that manufacturers had seriously under estimated consumer demand, although they had fulfilled their projected shipments.