

difficulties in obtaining supplies manufacturers have to get their supplies of containers of all kinds far in advance. Those which they have on hand at present will be used during the coming summer for the packing of their goods. They will be delivered to the wholesaler during the winter and the spring and summer of next year, and will not reach the consumer until after that time. If this Bill were to take effect one year from the present time, all the bags, cans, labels, etc., in the possession of the manufacturers or packers would be useless, and in many cases it would be necessary to get new packages and new labels. There would be a tremendous loss. It will be more than a year—it will be eighteen or twenty months yet—before the present stocks are disposed of. We want to be careful. We do not want to injure any one set of people. What we want is legislation in the interest of the entire country, not in the interest of any particular class; and I contend that there is too much legislation enacted to-day for the consumer, and not enough protection for the manufacturer. It is popular to talk about placing a tax or a restriction on the manufacturer, but the public do not realize that they must ultimately pay for it every time, and pay heavily, because the manufacturer's trade is crippled and he cannot do good business. Such laws do not have the effect intended, but just the reverse.

Hon. E. D. SMITH: The principle of this Bill, if there can be said to be any principle in it, consists of two parts. In one part it provides standards. With that I thoroughly agree. I believe that the time is coming—in fact, it is long past—when we should have standards fixed for foodstuffs especially, and for many other commodities. I think that the system of specifying by Act of Parliament or by regulation the standard sizes of packages, standard contents for those packages, and standard qualities for the goods in the packages, is the proper system. Part of this Bill provides for such standards in certain articles. Last night we put through a Bill respecting fruit packages. The whole of that Bill pertained to standardizing; therefore, in my judgment, it was an excellent Bill, and no opposition was shown to it in this House. Why should there be any opposition to it? It provided for standards of sizes—only a few sizes. There are only two sizes of baskets for general use; so no person can fail to know what he is buying. Therefore there would be no possibility of

Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON.

the consumer being cheated, which I presume is the object of this Bill; a highly desirable object, and one with which everyone would agree. But this Bill, in my judgment goes about the matter in the wrong way. Though in general the Bill is all right, it has many features, even as it now stands with which I cannot agree. When the Bill was brought into the House of Commons, it was totally different from this one; but the House of Commons riddled it to pieces, so that it can hardly be recognized as the same Bill, which shows that it had not been well considered, in many respects, when it was introduced. The question is, what is the best way to protect the consumer? This Bill provides, first of all, that the packer shall put his name and address on the packages. I agree thoroughly with that; no one should put out a closed package unless he becomes responsible in some way for its contents, and when the packer's name and address are on the package it can be traced to its source.

The only clause to which I seriously object is the one requiring the net weight to be printed. That is the catch. It seems all right, but it does not amount to anything. The printing of the net weight on the packages does not protect the consumer, or does so only to an extremely limited degree. I will admit that it is better than nothing, and I would hold up both hands for printing the net weight on the package if there is no other way of protecting the consumer. But there is a way ten times better than that, absolutely protecting the consumer and at the same time enabling the manufacturer to produce his goods cheaper, while this Bill would cause them to be dearer. Every manufacturer who is compelled to mark the net weight on every package would have to print such weight on all present labels, or else put two labels on, which most manufacturers would have to do, because many of their labels would be spoiled if anything else were printed on them, as they are small, neat, lithographed labels with a pretty design. Any expense involved in either method would be saddled eventually on the consumer. It may be said that new labels could be printed; but the present stocks of labels would not be used up for ten years, because manufacturers having many main lines of products get supplies enough for that length of time, and only in certain cases are labels made every year; hence manufacturers would have to supply this printing of the net weight before