

Home Canning

crisis was as serious to the homemaker as the energy crisis was to industry. As a result the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) acted immediately, and did manage to get some lids out west—from Chicago, I understand. There were not enough, though, to even resolve part of the problem.

The letter from Mr. Lynch of Perco Sales, Vancouver, continues:

Whereas we ordered some 90,000 cases into production on Bernardin last year, you will be pleased to note that we have managed to gear up production for 1975 to accommodate some 215,000 cases of Bernardin for western Canada. Needless to say, we have in particular, put the emphasis on wide mouth lids, the specific item so short last year.

Should you require any additional information relative to Bernardin and or Dominion Glass, please do not hesitate—

And so on. The details he sends to the large retail outlets are advising them to start getting in their supplies. The supplies for canning will begin to appear in the stores this month.

A further letter written by Perco Sales reads:

2. We anticipate that the American suppliers, namely Kerr and Ball will have a short fall of supply quite similar to 1974, thus putting the pressure on the 2 Canadian produced product lines, Bernardin and Dominion Glass.

3. We are concerned that you and the other wholesalers and chains may tend to underestimate the vacuum that now exists in terms of inventory at the:

- a) Supplier level
- b) Wholesale and chain warehouse level
- c) Retail level.

He goes on to say—he always uses the first person, and he used my name in the letter—and this one is to Cyril Keech of Woodward stores in Vancouver, one of the largest outlets:

In other words, Cyril, there is one hell of a pipeline to fill before the market is even ready to service the consumer, let alone the normal repeat, refill or back-up product supply required before we can claim the situation is back to normal.

To correct the extreme shortage we experienced on Bernardin last year, and to pick up some of the slack from the lack of Kerr and Ball, we have:

- a) Programmed production in the Bernardin Toronto plant to start much earlier in the fall of 1974 so that the 1975 requirement will be available by early February. This, of course, has been done.
- b) The Canadian Steel Company was approached and has approved a 100 per cent increase in steel allocation to Bernardin of Canada Ltd.
- c) Two shifts were activated for the first time in the history of the Toronto plant, starting December 1, 1974.

This next point kind of frightens me, though:

- d) A new line to accommodate additional production of key items will be in place and operating by March—April, 1975.

At this point I wonder if this is what will make the old jars obsolete.

- e) Most important, and depending on the item, we increased the quantities of finished product for British Columbia by anywhere from plus 100 per cent to plus 300 per cent. For example, we sold some 8,000 cases of wide mouth Bernardin lids in 1974 in British Columbia and will have some 24,000 cases of this specific item for 1975.

I would like to quote George Washington because I think it is rather interesting that what he said in August, 1777, sounds very much like today in 1975. He was writing to the president of the congress and he said:

[Mrs. Holt.]

The matter I allude to is the exorbitant price exacted by the merchants and vendors of goods for every necessary they dispose of. I am sensible the trouble and risk in importing give the adventurers a right to a generous price, and such, from the motives of policy, should be paid; but yet I cannot conceive that they, in direct violation of every principle of generosity, or reason and of justice, should be allowed, if it possible to restrain 'em, to avail themselves of the difficulties of the times, and to amass fortunes upon the public ruin.

I do hope that the motion of the member for Okanagan-Kootenay is considered seriously and that there is a watchfulness, at least, from the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Ouellet), the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) when the time comes for people to bring in their own gardens or to harvest the fruit of the fall.

● (1730)

Mr. G. H. Whittaker (Okanagan Boundary): Madam Speaker, on rising to speak to this motion may I say I sincerely hope that in the interests of consumers in Western Canada, particularly housewives who preserve the products of agriculture, the government will see fit to accept the motion moved this afternoon. This will be an indication that it is taking the matter seriously. On many occasions when I have risen to ask questions about the matter it has appeared to me that the government did not take the matter seriously because the same situation did not arise in eastern Canada.

I should very much like to show my file on this subject to the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt). I knew what the problem was by the end of July last year. Some of my constituents said a shortage was deliberately created to raise the price, but very early I found that this was not so. There was even a shortage the previous year, but it was not as bad. Nevertheless, no steps were taken by anyone, be they distributor, chain store or anybody else, to increase manufacture of these lids. The reason I raised the subject early this year is that these lids must be manufactured long before they are used for canning. Someone must take the responsibility of storing them, keeping an inventory, and so on, and it was claimed that this was the manufacturer's responsibility.

Early last July I wrote to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie), the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) and the Food Prices Review Board. Eventually I received answers from all of these bodies, but the only answer that really made sense was from the Food Prices Review Board. This made me feel bad because I had been rather hard on them in parliament the previous year. They do not have the same type of facilities that departments and ministers of the Crown have, yet they did the best job of sorting out this problem.

The reason there was a shortage in western Canada of these lids for wide-mouthed Mason jars was that for the last 10 or 12 years these lids were imported from the United States because they were cheaper than lids shipped from eastern Canada. Incidentally, the same thing can be said of meat pies, and it will soon be true of boats and mobile homes as it has been for many other commodities purchased by western Canadian consumers. Since they