

Act was not to come into force until December 15, 1918, which gave the lobster packers every opportunity to prepare themselves for the required change. They have made no preparation, so far as I can see, and yet they come back and ask—I presume they have asked, although we have had no evidence that they are making any particular demand, except the minister says that the packers met at Halifax and thought some change should be made for some trifling reason, which to my mind is not satisfactory evidence—that we should make this change at the present time. If there is any evidence in favour of making the change my mind is open to conviction. But, Sir, although I come from a constituency in which a large number of lobster packers operate, not one of them has spoken to me in reference to this proposed change. All the evidence in support of it that we have is, simply the Acting Minister of Naval Service coming forward and asking for the passage of this resolution. I say candidly that in my opinion better evidence and more conclusive arguments should be advanced before we are asked to undo what we did in 1917.

Hon. A. K. MACLEAN: If my hon. friend thinks that the conclusion reached by the Fisheries Committee in 1917 was a wise one, he should criticise quite severely the legislation which was then passed, because the Act does not embody the conclusions of the committee. In 1917, for the first time, a Bill was introduced defining what should be the quantity of dry lobster meat in the several cans. Cans of certain sizes had been in use in the lobster industry for a great many years. They were known as the pound can, the three-quarter-pound can, and the half-pound can, and it was known to the public—at least to everybody in the trade—that these cans did not contain sixteen ounces avoirdupois of lobster meat. A Bill was introduced into the Commons by the then Minister of Naval Affairs providing that a pound can should contain thirteen ounces of lobster meat; a three-quarter-pound can, nine and three quarter ounces; a half-pound can six and a half ounces; and a quarter-pound can three and a quarter ounces.

Mr. COPP: When was that Bill passed?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: The Bill containing those provisions was introduced by the minister in 1917. It was referred to the Fisheries Committee and was there amended to the effect—so I am instructed by the officers of the department—that the pound

[Mr. Copp.]

cans should contain sixteen ounces of dry lobster meat.

Mr. ROBB: Had not that been the custom for many years, that there should be sixteen ounces to the pound can?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: There never was any legislation whatever upon the subject prior to 1917.

Mr. ROBB: But sixteen ounces was in accordance with the custom of the trade?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: A standard can was in use in the lobster canning industry, but there was no statute requiring that there should be any stated number of ounces of lobster meat in the can. That was required for the first time in the legislation of 1917. I am informed that the Bill, as amended by the Commons, went to the Senate, where it was again amended to the effect that a pound can should contain fourteen ounces, which apparently was one ounce more than was demanded by the Bill as originally introduced. Apparently, the fourteen-ounce provision was a compromise. Now these cans, while selling as pound cans of lobster, never did contain sixteen ounces of meat. The Department last year purchased a great number of cans in order to determine the average quantity of lobster meat which each can contained. I will give the Committee the weight of dry meat in six cans that were purchased, these being the products of Canadian canneries.

No.	Weight of contents.
1	12.38 ounces
2	11.39 ounces
3	13.41 ounces
4	11.57 ounces
5	12.38 ounces
6	11.38 ounces

It will therefore be seen that the average content of the pound lobster can was about twelve ounces—sometimes a little over, sometimes a little less. In Newfoundland the average weight in a can of lobster is just about the same as in Canada. That was an undesirable condition of affairs, and I cannot understand how any hon. gentleman can argue that it is at all proper, from the public standpoint, or from the standpoint of the consumer, who has a right to know the exact content of any container in which food is placed. The purpose of this Bill, and it is quite in harmony with recent legislation, is to provide that there shall be four sizes of cans for canning lobsters. The cans of each size shall each contain no less than three ounces avoirdupois, six ounces avoirdupois, nine ounces avoirdupois, and twelve ounces avoirdupois re-