

the minister has just said, this question is very clearly covered in clause 9 of the bill. We do not want to take up the time of the House in dealing with amendments which are superfluous and do nothing to improve the legislation. As the minister has said, this matter is covered very clearly in clause 9. The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) may say something to contradict that and contribute new argument.

However, there is no doubt there is a case to be made for the substance of the amendment moved by the hon. member. During the course of his remarks he referred to misleading and confusing sizes and mentioned toothpaste as a very graphic example. This was illustrated in the evidence presented to the committee. He also referred to the container sizes of cereals. The evidence to support the need for regulation in this area stems from the complete confusion which exists in the minds of consumers as a consequence of the terms used in advertising products in Canada. For example, in relation to toothpaste we now have regular size, giant size, family size, super size, and so on. The same thing applies to the packaging of cereals and the packaging of detergents, just to mention two others. I am sure other examples could be brought to mind.

However, Mr. Speaker, I believe the case is very clearly covered by clause 9 and I do not think it would improve the legislation in any way if the House were to accept this amendment. Consequently, even though we support the principle, we regret we are unable to support the substance of the amendment.

**Mrs. MacInnis:** Mr. Speaker, when I mentioned a few moments ago perishable products, I did not have in mind red herrings. When the minister spoke about slack fill in connection with the proposal of my colleague from Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) this is exactly what he was producing, a red herring without regard to age, temperature, storage, condition or anything else, because what my colleague had to say did not have anything to do with slack fill. He was proposing a way in which to cut down on these weird sizes. It should be just as easy to make a package which would contain 16 ounces as one which would contain 17 ounces. There would still be a problem in respect of slack fill in either case.

What my colleague is proposing is that since we now have the ordinary Canadian units of measurement and are now getting ready for the metric system, we should either produce packages in multiples of inches or ounces or get ready to produce them in units of the metric system and not produce cans of 17 ounces or 19 ounces. I believe the case for the amendment has been made. I think the consumers' association is very much aware of the need for having standard packages without the use of fractional weights.

I should like to conclude tonight by referring to a letter from a correspondent in Vanier City. I believe my colleague from Regina-Lake Centre mentioned the need to consider the problems and ideas of Jane Canuck. I realize that Jane Canuck is not in this House tonight in the

### *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*

numbers she should be. However, I have this letter from one Jane Canuck in Vanier City and I think it might help the minister understand what my colleague has in mind in respect of his amendment if I read it. She says:

One aspect that doesn't seem to have been touched on is the matter of convenience. When following a recipe that calls for one standard pound of a food, it's a bit unnerving to find that your container has only 12 or 14 ozs. To make up the difference you would have to buy a second one, or alter every other ingredient (for instance, 12/16—or 3/4 of an egg!). I'm sure you get the picture!

We have heard from some members of the official opposition about the convenience of manufacturers. We have heard about the marketplace and that these things would be done by the dealers in the marketplace if they found it profitable to do so. But I believe my friend from Vanier City is correct and that there has not been too much said about the convenience or even the sanity of the consumer in trying to decipher these odd sizes. This lady baked a cake and presumably found that when the recipe called for a standard pound of some ingredient she had a package that contained only 12 ounces or 14 ounces of the ingredient. So she did not know whether she should get a second full pound package or try to divide the egg or whatever else was called for.

● (9:50 p.m.)

I think it is time we began to consider our legislation from the standpoint of the convenience of the consumer who has to go out to the market, buy the products, bring them home, store them and prepare them for the family. The sooner we get a few more Jane Canucks in the House, the sooner we shall get a little more intelligence on the part of John Canucks who have not had to wrestle with these problems.

The amendment of my colleague arises directly from the situation that this woman in Vanier City is envisaging. We should stop our traditional thinking as to whether or not it will be handy for the manufacturers to make alterations. We should start thinking about the needs of consumers. The consumers of this country have just begun to find their voice. It is a little timid and squeaky as yet, but we can encourage the minister to speak up more strongly for their needs. He has made a pretty fair start, but he is timorous and he needs encouragement. Let him take another look at this amendment, which is really an excellent one and would do much to help the consumer recognize deceptive packaging when she sees it.

**Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief comment on the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin). I think that perhaps the political environment in which he lives brings into suspicion everything that is done by manufacturers and makes him suspect that it is done with malice aforethought; that these odd numbers of ounces in cornflakes, for example, such as 9, 13 and 17, are there to confuse and confound the housewife so that unfair advantage can be taken of her in some mysterious way.