

TEXTILE LABELING - IS IT ADEQUATE TODAY?

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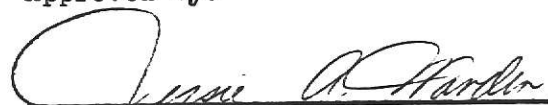
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## INTRODUCTION

The Textile Fiber Products Identification Act (TFPIA) was passed to provide disclosure of component ingredients, net contents, and other terms of service or care information for textile fiber products. It is assumed that the next level of disclosure of textile information would be a product's performance characteristics (24). Since the fiber identification bill is now ten years old, the assumption of this study is that the retailers believe the information provided on current textile labels is not adequate to meet the needs of the consumer.

A few provisions of the fiber identification bill are the disclosure of fiber content, protection to businessmen against unfair competition, and establishment of a classification of fibers and definitions. Other provisions and strengths of the bill are: (1) provides for the name or other identification of the manufacturer of the product; (2) discloses the name of the country where an imported textile fiber product was processed or manufactured; (3) provides for protection for consumers with a statement to the effect that an upholstered product, mattress, or cushion containing stuffing that previously had been used in any other upholstered product be labeled as such; (4) provides for the designation of the percentage of each fiber present, by weight, in the total fiber content (25).

At the time the first fiber labeling bills were passed in the late 1930's few man-made fibers were available and our markets were relatively less complicated and wise selections were not as difficult as

today with the wide choice of fibers, fabric constructions, and finishes. Technology and an affluent society with new wants, needs, and desires have further complicated wise choices of textile fiber products. At the time the TFPIA bill was passed it was recognized that it "provided only part of the information needed for making a wise decision" (25,p.94). A review of the literature indicated that between 1960 and 1964 there was a substantial decrease in the number of articles written disapproving and criticizing the labeling bill. The review did not uncover any reference to additions or alterations in the provisions to keep up with the rapidly changing textile developments. However, it seems reasonable to assume that through its use there have been some changes made in the interpretation of the bill.

In the past ten years innovative developments have occurred in textiles and wearing apparel that have produced vast arrays of new fibers, fabrics, and finishes. The flood of new textiles is causing unusual problems for consumers in making an informed selection and problems for drycleaners and launderers (8). Certain textile products require special care procedures or techniques that should be followed in laundering and cleaning, both professionally and at home, to insure that the utility and appearance of the product will not be impaired by shrinking, stretching, or fading (5).

The consumer is affected by the limited amount of information provided on labels because of his lack of knowledge about the characteristics of fibers. The information supplied is usually in the form of detachable labels or tags that easily may be lost or destroyed before or after the purchase, so the information is of little value to the user. The fact that the labeling bill does not require service and care