

*Customs Act*

**Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo):** I move:

That clause 2 be amended by adding at the end thereof the following words:

"and this act shall cease to have effect on and after the 8th day of December, 1954".

The purpose of this amendment is self-evident. Grave misgivings have been expressed in various quarters of the house as to the possible result of this legislation, and doubts have been expressed as to the way in which it will be used and as to the competence of the advisers to the minister with regard to its application. Doubt has also been expressed in relation to the extent of the powers conferred on the minister by this bill.

Therefore I think it is only reasonable to suggest, as I am doing in this amendment, that this legislation should come up for annual review. It is obvious that when the government is faced with the date mentioned in the amendment it will prepare an amending bill to extend the life of the legislation if that appears advisable at that time.

**Mr. St. Laurent:** Mr. Chairman, I do not think it would be proper to have a limitation of this sort in a bill of this nature. This is a bill to provide a method whereby the dumping alleged to be taking place as a result of selling goods in Canada, at the end of the season or at the end of a run, at lower prices than those that have prevailed in the country of export while the main portion of the run was being sold. I do not think it should automatically come to an end on December 8, 1954.

First of all there is the obvious reason that if it were found to be a desirable bill to continue in existence it might not be possible to have the replacing bill enacted before December 8, 1954. It so happens that this year parliament met in November, but that is something unusual, that is something that does not happen every year. We would not like to feel committed to something that would make it not possible to select the date for the meeting of parliament which might appear under the then existing circumstances to be the most proper.

I do not think the manufacturers who are having considerable difficulty at this time keeping their industries going would feel that it was fair to them to say, "We are going to do this, but we are going to do it only for the period from now to December 8, 1954." I would hope that even under the difficulties facing the textile industry—that is the one in connection with which we received the most pressing representations—they would endeavour to keep operating by improving their methods and thus tiding over a period when there is world-wide overproduction of textiles, a production in greater quantity than the consuming public

is using. I do not think it would be proper to say to them, "This legislation will come to an end on December 8, 1954".

Hon. members may feel that this matter should receive reconsideration, but that is possible when the estimates of the department are under consideration. The fact that it would be discussed on the estimates would not mean that the legislation would have to be modified. I think it has always been the attempt of those responsible for government policies, whatever government may have been in power, to meet the wishes of the people as represented by the majority of members in this house. There certainly will be an opportunity every time the estimates of the Department of National Revenue are before the committee to give consideration to the manner in which the powers given to the minister by this bill are being exercised and to express opinions as to whether or not those powers should continue to be available.

I do not think it would be a proper response to the conditions that exist at the present time to pass legislation that would automatically cease to be operative on December 8, 1954, unless there was a re-enactment prior to that date.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Chairman, there has been very considerable evidence of the fact that we are not impressed with the effectiveness of the amendment to carry out the desired purpose. On the other hand we have made it clear that we are prepared to support anything which is attempting in some measure to meet a situation which the government has clearly shown to be one calling for some legislative action. As has already been indicated, the question before us is not one of tariffs or anything of that kind. It is a question as to whether or not a provision which will deal with devices that permit unfair practices in relation to workers of this country is to be dealt with under a law that was originally introduced in 1904.

I say that because I would not wish anything I now say to appear to express satisfaction with the form of the amendment, although we do support the intention expressed. I agree with the Prime Minister that it would be an unsatisfactory thing to have this act terminate at the date suggested by this motion. We have no assurance that the house will be in session at that time. Without now reviewing the arguments that took place earlier on that point, I would point out that we have been informed by the minister that it will be necessary to wait for the actual operation of the act before its impact upon this problem may be known.