

But they are a special case. I repeat that the June 30 date was taken because that was the latest date for which figures were available when the restrictions were put into force.

Mr. GREEN: That might have been all right at the time; but now that we have the legislation before us, would it not be wise to follow the suggestion I have made?

Mr. ABBOTT: The difficulty is that quotas are set. They have been operating since November 17. We are now in February, discussing the legislation. So that it would be pretty difficult to adopt literally my hon. friend's suggestion. I do not think the basis of performance up to June 30 is an unfair one, because the volume of imports, during the year which ended June 30, 1947, was at an all-time high for this country. I do not believe there is anything wrong in that basis.

Mr. GREEN: It seems to me that that is looking at the problem from the point of view of the officials who are administering the plan rather than from the point of view of the man out in the country who is being hit. Surely his quota should be based upon the goods he imported in the year immediately preceding the time these restrictions went into effect.

Mr. ABBOTT: One reason why I personally would object to using that basis is that during the last month or two, before these restrictions were imposed, there was a terrific acceleration of imports from the United States. Many people thought the restrictions were coming on, and there was a rush to bring stuff into the country. I believe that the last month or two before the restrictions were put on would represent a completely distorted picture of the normal imports into this country; and I think it would be wrong to use as a basis the period just before these restrictions became effective. I believe that is a pretty compelling reason for using June 30 as the date.

Mr. GREEN: That may be all right for the big fellow, the fellow who was smart and perhaps got a hint from somewhere that this plan was coming into effect—

Mr. ABBOTT: Nobody got a hint from anywhere. No innuendoes of that kind, please.

Mr. GREEN: If the minister is putting the quota on its present basis for that reason, then I say it is punitive; it is not fair at all. I am referring to the case of the small man in business in Vancouver or Halifax who had not the remotest idea that this plan was to be brought down. He carried on his business in the regular and ordinary fashion. Then he suddenly found that a quota was put on and that, instead of its applying up to November

17 or the end of October, he is cut off at the end of June. I know of several cases in which there has been the utmost unfairness as a result. Those men can get no consideration from the department. If in a bona fide case they can be given consideration, all right; but I suggest that there is hardship at the present time and that, because of the way in which these quotas are being administered, these men can get no help.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am informed by the assistant deputy minister, who is head of the emergency import control division, that we have had almost no complaints as to the fairness of the June 30 date. There have been questions raised by veterans who have gone into business at a later date and, as I have already said, special provision has been made to take care of them. But in respect of the ordinary importer I can see no unfairness in using that date. It is just as fair for one as for another. I think, myself, that the period ended June 30, 1947, represents a high level of import so far as this country is concerned, and I believe that any attempt to use another date would create more unfairness than the date now used. As I have said, veterans are treated as special cases; but I repeat I have been told that we have had almost no complaints as to the fairness of using that date.

The CHAIRMAN: May I draw the attention of the committee to the fact that we are now considering section 1, short title. It seems to me that the committee would make more progress if it abided by the rules of the house and considered matters as they appear in the clauses. For instance, the question which we have been discussing could properly be discussed under section 5 (1) (b), the latter part of which reads:

... and the method of calculating the quotas, or prescribing the circumstances in which permits may be issued to applicants therefor.

I ask hon. members to discuss the bill clause by clause.

Mr. SKEY: I think, Mr. Chairman, you will find that the references which I have to make are in order because they are general in nature. I should like to refer back to the time when I spoke on this bill when I had an exchange with the minister, in part humorous and in part serious. The minister has done me the honour of dealing with one of the recommendations that I made to him when he replied, as reported on page 735 of *Hansard*. However, he did not deal with one other recommendation which I made at that time and I should like to give him an opportunity

[Mr. Abbott.]