

Customs Act

somewhat in doubt as to the relevancy of that discussion since we are considering the addition of the new clause to section 35.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Chairman, may I point out that already there have been certain specific proposals put forward. In the discussions that have taken place it has been indicated that no matter how much agreement there may be in principle as to the need for doing something, there is great doubt as to the effectiveness of the proposal that is made. I submit that nothing is more relevant to an understanding of what is now before us than to try to find out exactly why this kind of change is necessary and to have the basis upon which a reasonable discussion can take place and the appropriate change can be made.

The purpose of meeting in committee is to be able to examine a bill; and in fairness, I should say that on a number of occasions suggestions that have been made by the opposition with regard to amendment of various measures have been accepted and have represented a great improvement. In order that that may be done and in order that the usefulness of committee discussion may be a reality, it is essential that we know more than we now know as to why this particular form of amendment is before us.

I would point out that the hon. member for Greenwood a few days ago asked whether this amendment would apply to other industries than the textile industry to which the minister had referred. The minister in effect replied that he would not know until his officials had had an opportunity to report to him what the result of the application of this amendment would be. I rose later and asked if the minister had not considered what the impact on industry generally would be; and again in effect—because I am not attempting to quote the exact words used—he said he would not be able to tell until his officials were able to report to him how this was working and what the effect was. What is being attempted at this moment is to obtain that information which is essential for an understanding of why this amendment is now before us and of what amendment would be most effective to deal with the situation.

Mr. McCann: I made a statement the other day on the question of the hon. member for Greenwood as to whether this amendment could be applied to any other commodity. The statement was in the affirmative, and that, as I have been quoted by the Leader of the Opposition, the effect of this amendment would not be known for some time.

That opinion is shared by the trade. The association of Canadian primary textile manufacturers said today:

While textiles are only one commodity affected by the new federal anti-dumping legislation, any steps taken to strengthen the Customs Act is a move in the right direction.

The house is in accord with that part.

It is too early to know the effect of the legislation mentioned in news reports until it is studied and its application over a period has been observed.

Mr. Rowe: That is exactly what he is saying. They do not know and you do not know.

Mr. McCann: I reiterate my statement that it can be made applicable to other commodities. The hon. member for Greenwood yesterday challenged me to name anything else but textiles which might be end-of-the-line. What about shoes? What about ladies' purses? What about pharmaceuticals? There was a time when the pharmaceutical trade in this country made objection to the fact that antibiotic drugs were being sent in here at sacrifice prices. That was a time when there was bound to be a change in the manufacture of what were called the antibiotics of early days to the much later and more modern one of penicillin. Those are examples of types that may be affected as end-of-the-line goods and which produce something of distress selling.

Mr. Rowe: What about electrical equipment?

Mr. McCann: It is not exactly in the same line.

Mr. Macdonnell: I am very interested in the minister's exposition because I understood there were several of those who sit behind him who explained yesterday that they regarded this section as a purely emergency measure in aid of the textile industry.

Mr. McCann: I have stated on different occasions that it was not.

Mr. Macdonnell: Yes, the minister has stated that. I want to come back to this section and to subsection 3 of section 35 which the hon. member for Eglinton read and which refers to cost of production plus administration, selling and profit. I understood the minister to say that the wording of that subsection was controlled to an extent by the wording of the preceding two subsections on one of which in particular we have the opinion of the justice department. I want to ask this question, and here again we come back to GATT. Will the minister also please remember that we have said we are going to vote for this. The only thing is, we wonder if it is as good as it can