

Export and Import Permits Act

We are glad that the government, in asking for this extension, is not making the mistake of asking for it on a permanent basis but just for three years. Nevertheless we do feel that there is justification for the suggestion that the act that is being extended might be looked at more closely by a committee of this house, namely the standing committee on banking and commerce. I therefore rise to express on behalf of this group the hope that the minister will accede to the request that after second reading of this bill it be referred to the standing committee on banking and commerce.

Mr. H. R. Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, in addition to this legislation providing for control over certain strategic materials going to various nations of the world, in other words, a form of export control, there is also a very wide provision for the control of imports. I certainly agree with my colleague the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, and the hon. member for Eglinton, that this bill should be referred to the standing committee on banking and commerce for further study. Because of the changing international situation it might be well if members from all sides of the house could look at the various items that are controlled, that are banned, and so forth, from going to various countries of the world, to see whether those items seem appropriate in the light of present international policies. I myself have no idea whether or not the list is too broad or too restrictive; but I think when trade is so important to Canada it would be wise if members of the house could make a thorough study of the provisions that are now in existence.

Then the other section allows for control of imports for purposes of the Agricultural Prices Support Act, the Fisheries Prices Support Act, the Agricultural Products Co-operative Marketing Act and the Agricultural Products Board Act. The only commodity that is controlled in terms of importation under this provision of the act is butter. With farm organizations across Canada making representations to the government that the price support legislation is being threatened by certain trade practices that are being followed, I feel an additional reason for having this legislation referred to the banking and commerce committee would be the opportunity it would present to invite representatives of farm organizations to appear before the committee to express their opinion as to whether or not the Export and Import Permits Act as it is now being administered is in fact being administered in the best interests of the agricultural industry and of the nation as a whole.

[Mr. Knowles.]

Hon. members know that farm organizations—perhaps not so much on the prairies as in Ontario and British Columbia—have complained from time to time of very large quantities of poultry being shipped into this country, including turkeys in certain seasons of the year and so on, in such a manner as to unduly depress the structure of prices paid to Canadian producers. The same thing was said to me recently by Mr. Albert Cormack, president of the Ontario farmers' union.

I am not an authority in this field, Mr. Speaker, but since this act makes provision for import permits as well as export permits I feel that this would be the right time for a committee of this house to consider the general trade policies of the country as affected by this act, and more particularly to hear the representatives of farm organizations so we could ascertain whether or not the other acts that are related to this legislation are in fact functioning in the best possible way.

Mr. Dickey: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: If the parliamentary assistant speaks now he will close the debate.

Mr. J. H. Dickey (Parliamentary Assistant, for the Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make one or two comments on the debate we have had on second reading. First of all I wish to express great appreciation to the hon. member for Eglinton for his very complimentary reference to the deputy minister of the Department of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Bull. Certainly the hon. member's reference is highly merited. There is no doubt that Mr. Bull has impressed hon. members of this house whenever he has appeared as a witness before one of our committees, and that was certainly the case in connection with the Export and Import Controls Act when it received consideration in committee.

I know the minister would want me to express this word of appreciation to the hon. member for Eglinton, and to say that Mr. Bull's work in the department has been very greatly appreciated. Our regret in seeing him leave the department is relieved only by our great satisfaction at the important new responsibilities he is assuming and the highly merited promotion in the public service he is receiving.

I do not think I should allow the debate to conclude without pointing out to the hon. member for Eglinton that his description of the powers that are vested in the minister under this act was not quite accurate. The powers he referred to with respect to the establishment of control lists on commodities and an area control list—that is, the general