

week or so ago and are on record, though I do not have them with me at the moment. The January figures will not be available for another three or four weeks. The December figures are a matter of public record, available to every hon. member of the house.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): The minister is right on that, of course; but he gave us a figure, I think to the end of January.

Mr. ABBOTT: January 29.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Presumably he has the figures of exports and imports, even if they are not for the full month.

Mr. ABBOTT: No, I have not, and they will not be available for two or three weeks. I have the figures as to our daily exchange position, but those are not the figures on exports and imports.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I see. Then you suggest that we cannot get any figures at all at the present time?

Mr. ABBOTT: Those figures are compiled from the returns received from the hundreds of customs ports across Canada. They cannot be available on twenty-four hours notice. There is always a lag of three or four weeks.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): But the foreign exchange control board must have the figures, because both export and import transactions are known to them. Certainly they know about the imports, because they furnish the exchange. I wonder if they do not have some means of knowing the export figures too and if we cannot get a rough and ready figure, not the last word but a working figure, up to the end of January. Will the minister look into that and see what can be done.

Mr. ABBOTT: I shall look into that; but I am sure that, so far as identifying it with a physical volume of goods, the foreign exchange control board could not very well have more rapid or up-to-date information than the customs branch which acts as its agent in these matters. Therefore I consider it most unlikely that we would have more up-to-date figures on the physical volume of imports from the foreign exchange control board than we would have from the Department of National Revenue, customs division. However, I shall make inquiries.

I can and do obtain weekly reports as to the exchange holdings of the foreign exchange control board; but there are forward commitments; and, while it is the intention, it does not necessarily follow that we will have the

day-to-day volume of trade imports, because there are invisible items such as settlements in respect of transportation, and so on.

If my hon. friend buys a ticket today in Canada to go to Miami for a couple of weeks he can buy it in Canadian funds, but Canada will have to settle for the United States mileage portion of that ticket in United States funds.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I shall not press the point, but I do say that while there may be a time lag, it is the same time lag all the time, and I think the day to day records of the foreign exchange control board reflect pretty well what is going on.

Mr. GREEN: There is one feature of this exchange conservation plan which seems to me very unfair, and I am hoping the minister can do something to remedy it. I refer to the way in which quotas are determined. Apparently the basic period is for the year preceding June 30, 1947. This has meant that in many instances people have been unable to qualify because they started in their businesses perhaps late in 1946 or early in 1947. I know it has hit several veterans very hard, and I do not understand why that period could not have been the twelve months preceding October 31 rather than June 30.

I notice in tonight's press that the quota for automobiles has been based upon the twelve months period ending October 31, 1947. I would ask that the quota for all goods be worked out on the same basis. It seems only fair that that should be done.

Mr. ABBOTT: The explanation of the point raised by the hon. member for Vancouver South is that when the import restrictions were put on, the June 30 figures were the latest for which full information was available. The figures for October 31 were not available at that time. As the committee knows, in respect of automobiles imports at the outset were prohibited, pending the working out of a quota. The quota in respect of automobiles had to be ascertained on a basis somewhat different from the others. Returned men are given consideration up to November 17, so far as imports are concerned. As I believe I said in reply to an interjection during the debate on second reading, a special quota figure has been reserved in order to take care of returned men who did not have a basis of performance in the previous period. I believe there is ample provision under the arrangement to take care of the returned men; and, as I say, they are given consideration for their imports right up to November 17.