

Textile and Clothing Board Act

Mr. Pepin: What papers do you read?

Mr. Downey: Controls may now become mandatory, and I suggest that we must at all times maintain a strong trading relationship with these countries. With regard to clause 27 of the bill and the import controls which could be exercised under it, I can only say that it has nothing to do with the textile board or protection of the textile industry. In fact, the textile industry could be specifically named. I do not believe in the type of restriction that is imposed here with regard to imports. I say they should be more specific, that it is almost impossible to accept a clause with such a broad range.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) should be the first to understand the implications of a clause of this nature. We had before the committee Mr. Dixon of the Canadian Importers' Association. I would like to read a section of their brief in which he tried to make a point in regard to the statements I have just made. In his brief, presented to the committee on February 16, he said that the tragedy of the proposed legislation is that it will seriously offend the majority of Canada's overseas customers. He said that all Canadian agricultural producers, primary resource producers, exporters of Canadian manufactured merchandise and, above all, the Canadian consumer will be affected.

The Consumers' Association of Canada was before the committee and expressed their fears that they would have to pay a higher price for textile commodities that are normally imported into Canada. They said this could tend to drive up the price of goods in other areas as our relationship with other countries deteriorated. As trade relationships with other countries deteriorate, we will find them cutting off Canadian imports; and I would point out that many of these countries are importers of Canadian raw materials. Again I state that we must look at this question from the western point of view and we might run into a situation where retaliation may come in the form of cutting off the importation of our raw materials, many of which come from western Canada.

I say to the minister again that I hope he appreciates the importance of maintaining good will in the area of international trade, and I hope he will take these matters into consideration before opposing the amendment before us.

Mr. Bruce Howard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I should like to comment on one or two of the points that have been made, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether the parliamentary secretary would address the Chair from his seat in the House. He realizes that we are not in committee and that he should address the House from his seat.

Mr. Horner: He will have to speak without the help of your minister's knowledge.

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): In my enthusiasm to enlighten the House, I rose in the wrong place.

Mr. Horner: It is not the first time.

[Mr. Downey.]

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): I want to say a word or two, first of all, about the concern that has been expressed by some hon. members this evening which implies that a reference to other goods was somehow slipped into this bill so that hon. members would not be aware of it; that their attention was not drawn to it and that they were ignorant of the fact. There was no reason for them to be ignorant of the fact.

Perhaps the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), who was not present in the committee, would not have had an opportunity to take part in all the discussions, but other hon. members who have spoken this evening were present at a number of the committee's sessions when we went over each clause carefully and discussed all aspects of the bill. I would have thought they would have picked up that point somewhere along the way. If they did not, the minister in a speech on second reading of the bill mentioned this point specifically. I will quote it to remind hon. members of what was said at the time. The following is a short section from that speech:

The new textile policy envisages the application of a unilateral measure including import quotas, in cases where a negotiated solution, such as a restraint agreement, cannot be reached... The amendment in the bill would enable the government to do this. However, the new subclause could be invoked only after a formal determination of injury by the textile and clothing board in the case of textiles and clothing and by the anti-dumping tribunal in the case of all other goods.

I repeat, "in the case of all other goods".

Mr. Horner: Oh, oh!

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): This was said by the minister in his speech on second reading. Mr. Speaker, I feel that if members of the Official Opposition, who apparently are opposing the bill this evening—

● (8:50 p.m.)

Mr. Baldwin: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has no right to say that we are opposing it. We are opposing certain very bad, repugnant provisions in the bill, not the bill itself.

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): It is very difficult to tell that from the comments made by a number of hon. members. I was under the impression that many of them were opposing the bill quite strenuously. Perhaps they are not too sure of their own position on this matter. I want to comment on the statements made by the hon. member for Peace River concerning clause 27. I point out that this clause deals very specifically with the purpose of the bill. I shall read some of the comments made during second reading. In his opening remarks on second reading the minister referred specifically to this section in the Customs Act and said:

There have been cases in the past where countries agreed to restrain their exports in order to prevent a serious disruption of the Canadian market but were unable to do so effectively... the new policy envisages continued reliance on negotiated restraint as the principal means of protecting against disruptive imports. However, such an approach can only work if the agreed restraint levels are effectively enforced. The proposed amendment to the Customs Act will enable the government to assist the exporting countries in fulfilling their commitments.