

*Export and Import Permits Act*

intentions any more than we did then; therefore as long as there are communist powers in the world and they are prepared to embark upon aggressive adventures when it may suit their particular purposes or whenever they see in such manoeuvres an opportunity of extending their ideological domain, then I suppose we must reconcile ourselves to the continuation in some form of the power to impose control designed to prevent the export of strategic materials to communist countries.

The other grounds which were put forward to sustain the right to impose export controls, it seems to me, have very much less weight now than they had in 1954.

On the import side, sir, the case for the maintenance of the power to continue import controls is much weaker than is the case with respect to export controls. One has only to look at the figures, which I shall give the house in a moment, to find proof of that assertion. This measure contemplates import controls in three situations, and they are set forth in the act in this form in Section 5:

The governor in council may establish a list of goods, to be called an import control list, including therein any article the import of which he deems it necessary to control for any of the following purposes, namely,

(a) to ensure, in accordance with the needs of Canada the best possible supply and distribution of an article that is scarce in world markets or is subject to governmental controls in the countries of origin or to allocation by inter-governmental arrangements;

(b) to implement any action taken under the Agricultural Prices Support Act, the Fisheries Prices Support Act, the Agricultural Products Co-operative Marketing Act or the Agricultural Products Board Act, to support the price of the article or that has the effect of supporting the price of the article; or

(c) to implement an inter-governmental arrangement or commitment.

Now, sir, there may be something to be said for the maintenance of import controls where these are necessary as the handmaid of price support legislation of the type set forth in paragraph (b) which I have just read. The types of situations contemplated in paragraphs (a) and (c), however, do not seem now to exist on a serious scale. There are undoubtedly situations such as the one to which the parliamentary assistant referred, where we have some arrangement with the United States, but I do not think the government can pretend that the case for import controls is any longer very weighty.

I said I would refer to the figures. The figures are interesting and, indeed, they speak for themselves. In 1954 I drew attention to the fact that in the four years 1950, 1951, 1952 and 1953 the number of export permits which had been issued, and which ought to be a reliable gauge of the need for export controls,

[Mr. Fleming.]

was 115,609. On the other hand, the number of import permits issued in that four-year period was only 2,332.

Under the 1954 legislation I might offer the house these figures. For the year 1955 the applications for export permits numbered 10,262; the export permits issued during the year totalled 9,962. In 1956 the number of applications received for export permits was 13,352; the number of export permits issued was 13,123. Now, sir, compare the figures on import permits. In the year 1955 the number of import permits issued was 4. In 1956 the number of permits issued was only 3. I am sure that in the face of those figures the government is not going to pretend there is a very serious case any longer for the maintenance of import control by order in council.

There is, to complete the picture, a provision in the act for import certificates. These are provided for under the act to facilitate imports into Canada from countries which would otherwise require satisfactory proof that the goods being exported from that country to Canada were not intended eventually for communist countries. In 1955 the number of import certificates issued was 637. In 1956 the number of import certificates issued was 559. So far as using import control to strengthen our price support legislation is concerned, it is significant that the only commodity under price support which has been brought within the scope of import control is butter.

I have offered this limited review in order to stress the fact that I think the time has come when there should be conducted by one of the standing committees of the house—obviously the standing committee on banking and commerce is the proper committee for this purpose—a review of the legislation and the administration of the act. A careful examination should be undertaken of the question whether or not the forms of control that are permitted by the act are now all necessary.

So far as second reading of the bill is concerned, I am prepared to take it on the basis that as long as we are threatened with aggression in the world there must be some power provided for control of the export of strategic material. Therefore, as the bill makes that provision, I think it must be given second reading. But I do strongly urge that before the bill goes any farther it ought to be referred to the standing committee on banking and commerce for that detailed review which I have submitted is necessary, and which has not been given to this legislation or the administration under it for 10 years.

Ten years is a long time with respect to the administration of a system of controls of