

Customs Act

buy sheets and pillow cases across the border for about 50 per cent of what we are obliged to pay for them here in Canada.

I wonder just how we will get a definition of this word "dumping" that can be applied fairly. That is my chief worry. I believe, as I said before, that the consumers in this country of ours have to be given some consideration. I want to give you one example, and it is an experience that I have had in my own lifetime. For a great many years I was engaged in the fishing industry, and we used tons and tons of spikes and nails in the building of sardine weirs. These materials came in from the United States for fishing purposes free of duty. I would go to Eastport, Maine, just across the border from where I live and I could buy spikes and nails manufactured by James Pender in Saint John, New Brunswick, for from 25 per cent to 30 per cent cheaper than I could buy them in my own town. I was told that these nails and spikes were dumped on the United States market, but I have never been convinced that that story was correct. I believed that the people of this country were being overcharged by 25 per cent, and I have always had the same belief.

When he spoke tonight the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming) said that this condition had been known to this government for twenty-one months—I believe my figures are correct—and the government had never taken any action. I wondered whether the hon. member for Eglinton had any idea of the exploitation that had been going on in this country, by the rubber manufacturers, the steel and cable manufacturers and others. I never heard him bring that to the attention of this government in the eight or nine years that I have been here. I brought it to their attention on different occasions because I felt there was a monopoly there; I was sure there was a monopoly there and the disclosures which have come to light within the last few weeks would certainly suggest that there was something wrong.

I believe that the people employed in this industry must have some consideration, as the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr has said. It is their bread and butter. I would not want to see one of those employed in the industry harmed in any way in this world; but in order to protect them do we have to protect the monopoly? That is my worry.

I have said on the floor of this house on many occasions that this country of ours was overrun with monopolies and combines. I am still of that opinion. It will take some time before an investigation can be made

[Mr. Stuart (Charlotte).]

in each and every case, but I am unable to find a single case that has been examined carefully where we have not found that a great deal of wrong has taken place and that the people of this country have been exploited. The prices that they have paid over the years have been unreasonable, particularly when they are compared with the prices that our friends on the other side of the border are paying.

I am prepared to support this regulation in so far as dumping is concerned. I do not believe that anything should be dumped in this country. When we have citizens of our own producing the same thing I believe they should have a fair break; but if this amendment will in any way assist companies which might be of a monopolistic character I would hesitate before I gave my support.

Once more, before I sit down, I want to say that in this country of ours there are a great many more consumers than there are manufacturers. It is nearly time that the consumers received some little attention. I feel that if we are to go into this matter it should be dealt with very carefully, as I said a few moments ago. The minister has a big job here. I believe that all sorts of pressure will be brought to bear on him for protection for other industries. Therefore I suggest that we move carefully. It might be well to investigate some of the industries that are complaining at the present time to find out if their trouble today is in the dumping of goods from other countries or in our own country where our prices are pricing them out of the market. I believe that before we shall have a sound and stable economy in this country our prices must compare in some ways with those to the south of us.

Hon. W. Earl Rowe (Dufferin-Simcoe): It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, to hear a debate like this; it creates a peculiar spectacle for one who has to listen to the arguments of those who want to protect the consumer on the one hand and to investigate the monopolies of the producers on the other, more particularly when it comes from hon. members to your right who have been demanding lower tariffs for years, and now propose to inaugurate a new protectionist policy. One cannot help thinking that there are, to say the least, inconsistencies in the arguments.

I wonder who the consuming public are. Are they not the people who are earning money? If they are not earning money, where are they getting the money to be able to consume? Who are these consumers you are worried about? Are they the farmers