

*Excise Tax Act Amendment*

Mr. ABBOTT: We probably could make a fairly accurate estimate. For instance, the automobile situation is this: from the 1st to the 18th of November it was 10 per cent, and then it was increased to 25 per cent. The figures could be broken down and probably an estimate could be made.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Like the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe, I agree with the minister when he says that if we are to do what I am sure everyone wants to do, that is not only live ourselves but help to meet the needs of others, we must have an over-all current account surplus. But that does not commend this taxation. I might just remark in passing, without labouring the point, that there are certain other measures which we think the government might have adopted but which they have decided not to adopt. Therefore we are forced back on this measure.

As I pointed out last night, and I do not intend to labour it further, this measure really has four aspects. The saving in United States exchange which it is hoped to achieve may be quite trifling. Along with the hon. member for Moose Jaw, I think we must have some idea of the amount involved before we can reach any intelligent judgment on the bill. Like the hon. member, I hope the minister will give us a breakdown, not only as to what we might be saving in United States exchange but other details as well. As I read the minister's speech of last December, the only saving in United States exchange that we shall make is the saving of United States parts of Canadian articles which are being kept out.

Mr. ABBOTT: And the reduction in the consumption of things that we can export.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): That brings us back to the minister's point of the current account surplus, with which I agree, but it does not necessarily mean that that is the way to get it. Therefore I think

we on this side are entitled to look critically at this bill. I believe the minister in his heart must recognize the fact that it is extremely difficult to understand it because it seems to go off in four directions. This measure originally came to us as a means of saving United States exchange and I think we are entitled to have some idea of how much United States exchange has been saved. We are also entitled to know—this may be more difficult to get—how much our own purchases have been cut down.

It is perfectly open to all of us to say that this is not the best way of doing this. Certainly there seem to be a great many flaws in it. Certainly it seems as though the people who are singled out here to make a sacrifice are not the people who should necessarily make it.

Progress reported.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. ST. LAURENT: The business tomorrow will be as announced earlier this afternoon by the Prime Minister. In the afternoon we shall take up the second reading of Bill No. 126, to amend the Pension Act. That is No. 19 on the order paper for today. That will be done in the hope that it can be given second reading in the afternoon and be referred to the committee on veterans affairs. If that is done before six o'clock we shall go on to the resolution providing for an amendment to the Canadian Wheat Board Act to provide for further payments to producers of wheat. In any event, we shall take up the resolution concerning the Wheat Board Act at eight o'clock if it appears that second reading of the pension bill will not be completed within a short time. If both those items are disposed of, we shall go back to the resolution dealing with the excise tax.

At six o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.

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