

Supply—Trade and Commerce

very long list of commodities that my hon. friend cannot buy freely from the United States without a permit.

Mr. Hatfield: I know that. Should not a person be able to know what he can buy? I call up a man and he tells me that I can import a certain article. I buy the article, and it is held up here by customs. A man here tells me that I cannot import it. Mr. Rogers, who was in the finance import branch, told me. He has gone out of that branch. I did not have it in writing; I had it orally with him.

Mr. Howe: Mr. Rogers was an officer of the Department of Finance. I take it that my hon. friend is having his trouble with the Department of Finance, that is, the wartime prices and trade board.

Mr. Hatfield: That is the trouble, he has been moved out of that position now.

Mr. Howe: We have our troubles as well.

Mr. Hatfield: What I should like to know is what we can import and what we cannot. Should there not be a published list?

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Could the minister not give a prediction at least?

Mr. Howe: All these lists have been tabled in the House of Commons; but I will endeavour to have them compiled into one list and table it before the end of the session if that will help my hon. friend.

Mr. Hatfield: They change all the time.

Mr. Howe: I know, but we all have to keep posted on these matters. That is why the citizens have representatives in parliament, so that their representatives can advise people just what the changes mean.

Mr. Fraser: But you never tell them.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): He has found a use for the opposition; that is something.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): There are one or two points which the minister did not cover in his statement this afternoon. Could he tell us something about exhibitions, particularly the Toronto trade fair?

Mr. Howe: There is a commissioner of exhibitions who is charged with the responsibility of the trade fair at Toronto and Canadian exhibits at trade fairs throughout the world, such as the British trade fairs at

[Mr. Howe.]

London and Birmingham, those on the continent, as well as certain exhibits in the United States. It is his responsibility to advertise Canadian goods wherever the department thinks it is appropriate to advertise by way of exhibits.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): As I recall, when the trade fair in Toronto was started the minister was quite conservative, if I may apply that word to him, in his estimate of what it might accomplish. In the light of the last one would the minister say a word as to just what progress has been made?

Mr. Howe: It would be more convenient to deal with this subject under the item that follows, but as the hon. member has asked the question I shall answer it now. The first trade fair was considered a success for a first fair. In my opinion the second fair was not as successful as the exhibitors did not seem to be as well satisfied as those who had exhibited at the first fair. The third fair was an outstanding success. There was a great range of exhibits and practically all the exhibitors with whom I talked—I think I talked to most of them—seemed quite happy about the results. It seems to me that it has been amply demonstrated that the fair is a first-rate piece of trade promotion. I think it can be considered an annual event, at least as long as the present trend continues.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Would the minister rate it just as high vis-à-vis the United States as vis-à-vis the European countries? Do we get proportionately as high a number of exhibitors from the United States? Does the minister attribute the improved condition as far as Europe is concerned largely to the exchange depreciation brought about last September?

Mr. Howe: The trade fair was never aimed particularly at the United States. As my hon. friend knows, the exchange situation has led us to encourage the diversion of purchases from the United States to the soft currency countries. However, there were a great many buyers from the United States at the last trade fair. Currency devaluation had the effect of bringing sterling area and European prices into competitive line with the prices of other countries and in that way devaluation has had an effect. It was useless for some lines to be shown here before devaluation.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Were the exhibits from the continent of Europe just as numerous as those from the United Kingdom?