

*Textile and Clothing Board Act*

• (8:20 p.m.)

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River)** moved motion No. 7:

That Bill C-215, an act to establish the Textile and Clothing Board and to make certain amendments to other acts in consequence thereof, be amended by deleting clause 27 thereof at page 12.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Mr. Baldwin:** No, Mr. Speaker. I would have been ready for the question had I not observed a slight measure of doubt over there. I hope I may be articulate enough to persuade hon. members on the other side of the House to accept this motion. However, that remains to be seen.

This motion follows the one which has already been put to the House, except for some differences. It does enable me to rebut the weak and specious arguments put forward by the minister. The first argument he used is one he will no doubt try to apply to this motion and I intend to anticipate it now. My objection is not one as to legality; it is an objection as to morality. It is not a very moral system which enables the government to try to persuade the House that it is dealing only with textiles and clothing and then to bring in by subterfuge—yes, I will use that word—and certainly without notice being given, clauses which deal with a great variety of goods.

The minister defends himself, as I suppose he will defend himself against my proper criticism now, by saying that the title covers such action. Read the title—“An act to establish the Textile and Clothing Board and to make certain amendments to other acts in consequence thereof.” That is, in consequence of establishing the textile and clothing board. For the minister to bring in legislation which in effect varies and amends to a substantial degree other legislation on such a pretext amounts, in my opinion, to legislative immorality and I have no hesitation in designating it as such.

What does clause 27, to which I am objecting, attempt to do? It is an attempt on the part of the government to change the Customs Act by providing as follows, and I am reading from clause 27(2a):

Notwithstanding subsection (1), where it appears to the satisfaction of the Governor in Council on a report from the minister that the goods—

This clause refers to “goods”, and under the Customs Act the definition is wide enough to include any goods at all—oranges, elephants, potatoes, what have you.

**Mr. Howe:** Orang-outangs?

**Mr. Baldwin:**

—where it appears to the satisfaction of the Governor in Council on a report from the minister that the goods, the export of which from any country is the subject of an arrangement or commitment between the government of Canada and the government of that country, are being imported into Canada in a manner which circumvents such arrangement or commitment—

It goes on to say that the Governor in Council may by regulation prohibit the entry of those goods. Mr. Speaker, there is no more connection between that clause and the

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

inherent principles of the bill we are dealing with than there is between rapeseed and immorality, and you should know that.

On second reading of this bill we directed our attention to textiles and clothing and this House, after a very good debate, gave its approval on the question of principle to the extent to which principle is still an element in second reading. Hon. members approved the bill as far as it dealt with textiles and clothing. There was a further discussion during the committee stage and some amendments were proposed at that time, as amendments have been proposed now. Those amendments did not go to the root of the bill itself; they dealt with procedure. We directed our attention in this House to the question of textiles and clothing, and now we find that all along this was a very small part of the bill. What we are being asked to do by clauses 26 and 27 is give authority to the government with respect to goods of any description to prohibit or restrict their entry into this country.

The minister may have a good case; the government may have a good case. The government may find it necessary for the purpose of protecting people and industries to say, all right we are going to deal with potatoes, we are going to deal with electric razors, we are going to deal with other commodities and we will ask the House to pass legislation which is comparable to the bill we are now dealing with, Bill C-215 having to do with textiles and clothing. And if Parliament is of the opinion that the minister has made a good case, as he obviously did in connection with this bill, it will pass that legislation. But here, under the guise of dealing with textiles and clothing the minister is asking us to give blanket approval to changes which would permit the government, a government which likes to exercise arbitrary authority and which exercises it improperly over and over again, without providing opportunity for debate on this issue to restrict the importation of any kind of goods it pleases.

The minister talks about principle. We talk about principle on second reading. What is the principle to which we agreed on second reading of this bill? Was it with regard to textiles and clothing? Was it with regard to any other variety of goods under the Customs Act? Was it in regard to the right of the government to establish by Order in Council an import control list which might include any articles at all? Three entirely different principles are involved there. We have given our approval in principle to a board. We have agreed to give that board and the Governor in Council certain powers. We have accepted this principle without objection.

The minister himself is a very honourable man and I know he would not do this on his own. But in a political sense it is a dubious strategy to invest the government with authority which it is not entitled to possess unless and until it has brought down specific legislation, debated the issue, taken it to committee, and so on. This is the basis for my objection. I only hope I shall be supported by all those who believe that parliamentary government should proceed along well conducted and orderly lines.

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, I want to put into their proper place the remarks I made