

Mr. MERRITT: I was interested a moment ago when the minister pointed out that quite a few Canadians had come forward to ask to have goods placed on the prohibited list. I think he was trying to suggest to the committee that there was something wrong with that, that such a measure of protection should not be granted to Canadian manufacturers or producers. I want to remind him that in this legislation he has taken very good care indeed to look after the business interests of United States firms. The non-discriminatory provisions of this legislation are based upon the idea that, no matter what Canada's situation may be, no damage must be done to United States commercial interests. I see no reason why Canadian commercial interests should not receive as much advantage as possible in our present difficulties.

I am not suggesting that he accede to all requests for embargoes which amount to prohibitive tariffs. But I can see that in the case of goods produced in the proper quantities United States exchange would be saved and Canadian producers would be benefited. It is quite probable that more employment would be created. I suggest that if the minister could tell our manufacturers and agriculturists that there was a time certain within which the restrictions would not be taken off it would enable them to carry on business with profit to themselves and to the people of Canada in producing the things which we need. It would perhaps assist in keeping down the cost of living.

It would not matter if the minister does not know exactly the time when the restrictions would be removed. In the case of agricultural production he could guarantee the growing season. Then these producers would be able to plant a certain crop and be sure that they would not be faced with dumping just when it was to be harvested. In the case of manufactured goods it might be that many industries could go into the production of goods which are now being imported if they had a time certain within which these measures would apply. The Canadian people would benefit from the goods produced. It would not matter if, in fulfilling that undertaking, the restrictions with respect to the particular commodities had to be maintained a little longer than other restrictions. I think that is a matter which the minister should look into most carefully. There is no reason at all why the interests of the Canadian people and the Canadian producers should not come first in his mind.

We have had examples of people wanting to grow vegetables under glass and things like that. When I was home in Vancouver

at Christmas time I had an inquiry from a business firm which for many years had had business connections with manufacturers in the United States. This firm asked me if I knew how long these restrictions would continue. I said I had no idea and I asked why they asked that question. I was told that they were considering what they would do in the future. They said that if the restrictions were to be maintained for years they would have to look into the question of whether they should change their agency to principals who could supply goods within the government's regulations, whether they should go into manufacturing for themselves or what they should do. They pointed out, of course, that if these restrictions were to be of a short-term duration they would not like to upset their long-term arrangements. The minister must know that these considerations are important, and they concern many businessmen across Canada. The fact that he cannot tell us for certain the date on which the restrictions will have to come off, and when the Marshall plan will come into effect, does not relieve him of any responsibility to give a lead to Canadian business and agriculture on this vital point of the restriction program. I urge him to relieve the people of Canada from uncertainty, even though he cannot relieve himself of uncertainty in this respect.

Mr. POULIOT: Mr. Chairman, the suggestion of my honoured colleague the member for Vancouver-Burrard is certainly worthy of consideration. I listened to him with great interest, but he should make some more precise suggestions to the minister and tell him what, in his view, is the time that should be taken to continue these controls in the interests of the farmers and the producers. I understand very well that it is embarrassing for the producers when there is a change in tariff. We complained of that a long time ago, and conditions are similar. A tariff must have a certain amount of stability, and in that there is a lot in what he said. He has spoken in a persuasive manner, and I am sure that he got the ear of the minister.

First, he complained that the cabinet ministers who are sitting on the treasury benches were smiling while he was speaking. There are two obvious reasons for this. In the first place, evidently they were enjoying his speech and, in the second place, they are naturally cheerful. It is a very good thing for cabinet ministers to remain cheerful in such circumstances as these, and it is to their credit.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard has not always a smiling disposition. He sees