

An hon. MEMBER: How many new ones have been added?

Mr. ABBOTT: There have been in fact no new ones added. The paper item which I have read has been reworded and, as a result of the rewording, the scope may be somewhat extended. I am informed that the intention is to catch the fancy boxes, if I may use that expression. There are certain specialty types of fancy boxes that are imported into the country and the change in the wording is intended to include these fancy boxes in the prohibition.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I presume that when this was worked out the minister of necessity had a figure of hoped-for savings of United States exchange which he attributed to each item. Is there any estimate of any kind?

Mr. ABBOTT: No. There is no intention of doing that at all. As I said just before the dinner recess, these schedules were prepared after a great deal of study by the technical people who are familiar with these things. But for reasons which I think are obvious, of necessity they were prepared without an opportunity of consultation with those who were directly concerned with the import trade involved. As a result of representations which have been made to me and to the emergency import control division since the schedules have been announced, and as a result of information which has been obtained as to the effect on importers and the economy generally, certain changes have been made. But no particular consideration has been given as to whether the change will result in a saving of a particular amount or otherwise, except for this; no change would be made which it was felt would result in a substantial impairment of our United States dollar position on balance.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I do not want to be too persistent about this, but I confess that I am a little bit surprised. After all, the government figured out a suggested amount which they hoped they might save. I have forgotten just what it was—\$300 million to \$500 million, if I remember correctly. It is hard for me to understand just how that was arrived at unless some pencil work had been done. While I appreciate fully what the minister says, to the effect that they could not take the business community into their confidence, nevertheless I should have thought that, with the elaborate statistical department we now have, these figures would be available. I

confess myself to be much surprised that no figures of any kind are given. How is that total made up?

Mr. ABBOTT: That is simple. I think I stated in the press conference which followed the announcement of these restrictions that, on the basis of importations during the preceding year, if importations were continued during the current year at the same rate as during the last year on all these items, the savings would be in the vicinity of \$300 million. Obviously any figure of that kind, so far as the future is concerned, cannot be better than an estimate. But if my memory serves me aright, I said that if we had continued to import the products, under schedule I, which are now prohibited, at the rate we had imported them during the preceding year, and if we had continued to import the products which were on the quota list at the same rate, without these restrictions we would have imported \$300 million more, which is obviously an estimate; but it was the best estimate one could arrive at.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I can understand that the estimate had to be a rough one, but I still submit that there is a great difference between an estimate and a guess. If I understood the minister correctly, what he said was that there was nothing more than a guess.

Mr. ABBOTT: No. I said that was an estimate.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): You called it an estimate; but if in fact—

Mr. ABBOTT: If my hon. friend can tell me at the beginning of January, 1948, that we shall import during 1948 exactly the quantity of goods that were imported in 1947, he is a better man than I think he is.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I would not say that at all.

Mr. ABBOTT: That was the only forecast I made.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Surely, when you have the figures with regard to the importation of a certain article in the year 1947, you have the figure as to what you may hope to save in 1948. That is what I am asking for.

Mr. ABBOTT: That is the figure I gave.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): No. I am asking that we have that by items. You must have that.

Mr. ABBOTT: We can give you that information, but I think it would be better to