

under such conditions as to cause or threaten serious injury to Canadian producers of like or directly competitive goods, any goods of the same kind may, by order of the Governor in Council, be included on the Import Control List—

I simply must register my objection. I point out that this was not discussed in the committee. There was a very brief explanation by the minister on an irrelevant aspect of it. I am quite sure the members of this House agree that, being asked as they are now asked to give the power to the government to place on the import control list not just imports of clothing and textiles, but any articles at all, is going too far. There is absolutely no qualifying restriction with respect to the type of goods which this Parliament is being asked to put under the provisions of the Export and Import Permits Act.

It is true of course that there is an inquiry made by the textile and clothing board, and then there can be an inquiry made under section 16A of the Anti-dumping Act. The Anti-dumping Act at the present time is available for the purpose of permitting the government to impose certain penalties in connection with a case where there apparently has been an infringement of intergovernmental arrangements. The antidumping board might hold that this has been the case and the government might then intervene and impose certain penalties.

• (4:50 p.m.)

I am sure it was never intended that this government should be given power, which it had not held before, to extend the provisions of the Export and Import Permits Act so that, at the whim of the government, goods of any kind could be placed on the restricted list. The minister may have an answer, although he has not given it yet and did not give it on second reading. When this situation was first called to my attention, I did not believe that the government was seeking these extraordinary powers.

I am not going to infringe upon the courtesy of the House which gave me permission to proceed now. I raised the issue and will have a chance to develop it on the next motion. It is for the minister to say why, in a bill limited to textiles and clothing, the government is taking these extraordinary powers to prohibit the importation into this country of goods of any kind. It is an issue which is irrelevant and foreign to the legislation we are now considering.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, may I first say that we are not trying to hide anything. The title of the bill is quite clear, "An act to establish the textile and clothing board and to make certain amendments to other acts in consequence thereof".

My second point is that this sort of thing is done regularly with bills such as this one which covers a certain sector but also affects a number of other existing bills. In these circumstances, it is quite all right to incorporate changes in the bill which will affect other bills. This is not undemocratic or unparliamentary. We have consolidated versions of existing acts. I fail to see, on the basis of pure legislative process why the bill would be faulty.

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Textile and Clothing Board Act

Mr. Baldwin: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it plain that I have never had any cause to suspect the purity of the government.

Mr. Pepin: And I have never had any cause to suspect the lack of intellectual virginity of my hon. friend!

We come to the three changes that the amendment would make. The first change would be "any other matter or thing in relation to textile and clothing goods". I fail to understand that. Perhaps my hon. friend will agree to push it aside unless it has a hidden meaning which escapes me.

The second point is one of substance and refers to approval of the extension of the bill to goods other than textiles and clothing. As this is the main point, I think we should deal with it now.

First of all, I am surprised to see such an amendment coming from the party which argued for more effective use of import-export permits. I can recall hon. members on the other side saying that we were not making enough use of this act. I can also recall a speech made by the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness) when he said that the power of unilateral action was already available in the Export-Imports Act.

Mr. Horner: Oh, that is a very weak argument.

Mr. Pepin: Let us try another one, then. I wish my hon. friend has as many good ones as I have. Maybe I do not understand the full substance of the argument, but the way I heard it the implication was that this extension should simply not be there. But why not?

Mr. Horner: From a free trade party—

Mr. Baldwin: Might I ask the minister a question?

Mr. Pepin: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Baldwin: Would the minister not agree that he could probably secure, without too much trouble, an extension of the provisions of the Export and Import Permits Act on clothing and textiles alone to bring them into this legislation? When, in addition to textiles and clothing, he says any other goods at all, does he not think there is valid cause for complaint?

Mr. Pepin: I don't see why. The implication would be that each time the government brings in new legislation covering, for example, a certain industry it would have to bring in bills covering all existing acts affected by the legislation, perhaps as many as ten. I think this is an excessive preoccupation with form.

Mr. Horner: It is a preoccupation in democracy.

Mr. Pepin: I think the spirit is more important than the form. The extension to other goods is clearly identified. When hon. members pass this article they will know what they are doing. I might say that safeguards have been written into the bill to ensure that it can only be used under extreme and stringent conditions. Serious injury must be demonstrated. The bill can only be used and is limited to the period necessary for removal of the injury. Another part of the amendment—

Mr. Horner: Five o'clock.