

*Export and Import Permits*

committee, and I should also like to refer to the great help given by Mr. Robinson of the Patent Institute of Canada. He attended many of the meetings of the committee, and was of great assistance in revising the act.

Mr. RICHARD (Ottawa East): I have only one criticism to make. I think the fees have not been raised sufficiently. I am sure we cannot expect the service mentioned by the hon. member for Eglinton with only this increase in fees. These are still the lowest fees in the world. No South American or other country charges such low fees as are mentioned in this tariff.

Section agreed to.

Sections 20 to 23 inclusive agreed to.

Bill reported, read the third time and passed.

## EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS

## PROVISION FOR REGULATIONS, PROCEDURE, ETC.

Hon. J. A. MacKINNON (Minister of Trade and Commerce) moved that the house go into committee to consider Bill No. 11, respecting export and import permits.

Mr. J. M. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I was on my feet, but I think you did not see me. However I should like to make a few remarks before the bill goes into committee. I thought, as a matter of fact, that the minister would make a statement on it, or that the chairman of the banking and commerce committee would make a statement, the bill having been reported from the committee with a few amendments. I should like to make a few observations on it.

The committee had the advantage of hearing senior officials of the Department of Trade and Commerce, and also Mr. Donald Gordon of the wartime prices and trade board; and I think the committee was satisfied that for the temporary period proposed it was certainly necessary to have certain export and import controls. And further—speaking for myself, and I think probably the other members of the committee—we thought it was wise to leave a certain flexibility. We thought it was not wise to insist that the full list of commodities be set out, and that they be not allowed to be changed; because we felt that, if that were so, the tendency would be to refrain from decontrolling certain commodities because they would not be able to be brought back in.

We felt that the officials, and particularly—well, I should not say “particularly” Mr. Gordon—we felt that all the officials were working toward the restoration of freedom, to the extent that their judgment carried. And

[Mr. C. W. G. Gibson.]

for that reason, subject to the amendment which will be proposed, it seemed to us that this was a reasonable measure.

I should like to make two comments before taking my seat. I think there is no question that the present restrictions are being felt keenly in certain quarters of the business community. I think we must face the fact, those of us who believe in the maximum of freedom, that every time you impose a restriction it leads to other restrictions; and it is almost impossible to tell how the ramifications and effects of one restriction—because, as I say, it will lead to others—may affect the community. The greatest argument of all for freedom is that if you do not have the maximum of freedom, then you have to go in for more and more restriction. And, quite frankly, I do not think there is the capacity to make these over-all decisions which some of our friends want to make.

I think, highly as we regard the officials who came before us, we found the very natural human tendency on their part to believe that they could set out to correct certain inequalities as between one person in the trade and another person in the trade. In certain cases which came to our attention they set out by regulation to control and adjust these inequalities.

We would all like to have equality. We would all like to believe that we have the wisdom to set up equality. But it did become clear; it became clear in the committee, certainly to myself, that these controls which set out to be, and, I think, genuinely purported to be, controls for the purpose of dealing with commodities which were in short supply, almost imperceptibly went beyond that, to a point where these same powers were used for further, and quite ancillary purposes, namely to create what was considered by the officials to be justice as between man and man.

I wish to add just one further word. Something will be said in committee as to the duration of the bill; a minor amendment will be proposed. But, broadly speaking, it will last about a year. There is nothing in the world to prevent the government from coming back at the end of the year and telling us that they need a further extension. But I would submit this, very earnestly, that the members of the government who are responsible should press on with the task of getting rid of these things; because while something may be said for controlled economy and while I believe a great deal may be said for a free economy, I think there is less and less to be said for trying to make the best of both worlds, trying to keep