

Supply—Trade and Commerce

industries efficient, and I maintain that Canadian industry today is efficient.

Mr. Knight: I think the minister has given me my cue to raise a particular matter. It does not fall under general discussion but has to do with the importation of electrical goods from Europe. The minister said the importation of electrical goods from Europe was practically negligible, and I am wondering if I have not perhaps laid my finger on one of the reasons for that. This matter does not come under any particular part of the government, but a question I asked was answered by an order for return from the minister's department, and it certainly has to do with the Department of Trade and Commerce.

One or two importers have written me who are largely engaged in the importation of electrical goods from Europe. I would judge from the letters I have received that the goods are manufactured in Western Germany, or perhaps in Austria. The matter has to do with the checking of the quality of goods in Europe before they are allowed to come to this side. I should not say "allowed to come to this side" because the Canadian Standards Association does not have complete power to stop goods from being imported into this country. But I claim it might almost as well have that power, because the effect of its decisions is practically the same.

The writer of the last correspondence I have had on this subject wonders if something cannot be done to expedite such inspection. He claims quite bitterly, and he is entitled to because he makes his living in this particular trade, that the approval of electrical goods manufactured in foreign countries is very slow indeed. He says the work is entrusted to what he calls a private firm. I expect that is not a good definition of the Canadian Standards Association. This organization may be private but I believe it receives from the dominion government a grant of some \$20,000 a year. The minister would know and can correct me.

Apparently the function of the association is to inspect goods after they have been ordered and before they are shipped. When this man orders a consignment of electrical goods from Austria or Western Germany the goods have to be submitted for inspection. I understand there is one inspection place in Britain, probably in London, and I happen to remember the name of the other one, Arnheim, because it is a famous name in our history as well as the history of Europe. Apparently there is a good deal of red tape and delay.

I would have been loath to believe these assertions were it not for the letters that have been written to this particular dealer by people on the other side, who are always complaining that they cannot fill these orders because they have not yet received the O.K. from the inspection point at Arnheim. This man even suggests, although I am making no such assertion, that somebody here has the power to prevent the very competition the minister has been talking about and which to some extent might account for the fact that our imports of electrical goods are negligible. Here are people, I do not know who they are or what they are, who apparently have the power—I use that word advisedly because it is proven in these letters—to hold up these shipments for an indefinite period of time. I feel it is time we should get some information upon it.

Upon the receipt of these complaints I put certain questions upon the order paper and the minister's department directed an order for return. In order to assist the minister I shall give the reference. It was sessional paper No. 226 of Wednesday, June 15. I believe I asked the logical questions. What is this association? What are its functions? Are its activities under the direct supervision of a government department? Has it branches in Europe and so on? Does it inspect, in Europe, potential imports to Canada? If so, where are such inspections made, and are such inspection points or offices open the year around so that decisions may be made without delay? What are the classes of goods with which this association deals?

Now, here is a rather vital question. Is permission to export certain goods dependent upon the result of its inspection? The answer to that is no. It is said that the customs and excise here will certainly not exercise any authority about keeping these goods out. The point is that the exporter will not send them to Canada, or perhaps I should put it the other way and say the importer will not confirm the order unless it first has the stamp of approval of this particular association.

This was all new to me, and I fancy it is new to a great many people in the country. I asked what was the source of the funds necessary to carry on its operations? I have outlined some of the questions, but I am not going to weary the house by any full recital of the answers. As I say, they are already registered with the parliamentary papers branch so that he who runs may read.

I was interested in the answer to question No. 8, to the effect that the association does not have any mandatory powers in regard