

tive action. The only source documents which meet these needs are customs invoices and import entries.

Import analyses are currently conducted by staff of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce having access to customs documents and sworn under the Statistics Act, in order that the confidentiality of transactions of individual importers be protected.

Under section 5(e) of the Industry, Trade and Commerce Act the minister is required to undertake import analysis for industrial development. The act does not provide, however, the authority necessary for the minister to carry out this mandate. The proposed amendment will make it possible to facilitate and otherwise improve the ability of the department to carry out this valuable service for Canadian business.

Finally, it can be stressed that only those employees of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce who are specifically designated by the minister and who have taken the prescribed oath will have access to such documents and information. This is clearly outlined in section 6.1(2) of this bill. Furthermore, the essentiality of maintaining the privacy of information which might otherwise identify the business activity of an individual importer, his agent or his customer, is fully recognized and safeguarded by the provisions of this bill.

These safeguards, which are comparable to those embodied in the Statistics Act, were closely examined and strengthened in the bill's passage through the other place. I believe that I have made clear what the benefits of import analyses are. I think they have been clearly demonstrated. I believe that improved access to source documents will increase their impact on industrial development in Canada.

I hope the House can move rapidly forward to the consideration of this bill at committee stage.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Madam Speaker, this bill gives the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) the right to obtain from the Department of National Revenue invoices of goods imported into the country.

We in the opposition agree with any proposal which will enable the minister to improve on the very inadequate job he is doing to protect the jobs of Canadian workers.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Don't get political.

Mr. Hees: This bill would enable the minister to become better acquainted with the goods being imported into the country. It is particularly desirable that he be better acquainted with the volume of manufactured products, those which produce jobs, which are entering the country in steadily increasing quantities, taking jobs away from Canadians and causing unemployment to rise.

For instance, last year imports of manufactured products into Canada increased by no less than 13 per cent over the previous year. When the minister is asked what he plans to do to slow down these rapidly escalating imports of manufactured goods and to stop the stealing of the Canadian market away from our producers and our

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workers, he simply refuses to answer. Instead he describes the programs that have been employed by his department for a number of years—programs which have recently proved to be totally inadequate to meet the situation—and which have allowed a steadily increasing proportion of the market to slip through the country's fingers.

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As an example, Madam Speaker, last week I outlined specific incentives which the government should introduce to induce greater productivity, research, and development and, by lowering costs and prices and increasing quality and design, enable Canadian producers and workers to regain the sales and jobs which the government's negligence in this regard is losing every day. As he always does, however, the minister simply continued to refuse to even consider practical suggestions made to him. With the passage of this bill I hope that perhaps at long last the actual figures on the imports of these manufactured goods that are pouring into the country every day in increasing quantities will finally be brought to the minister's understanding.

I hope that the sight of the actual invoices showing the quantities which are increasing every day, taking jobs away from Canadian workers, will convince the minister that the situation is very serious indeed. This was agreed by one of his backbenchers the other day, who had the guts to get up when I asked a question and ask the minister if he would bring my sensible suggestions to the attention of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner).

I hope that at long last the sight of these invoices will bring a little sense and action into the minister's comprehension. It is for that reason, and that reason alone, that we in the official opposition are very pleased to allow this bill to go forward.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Madam Speaker, I was of the opinion that this would not have a great deal of effect except that it would probably legalize something that takes place now, but after listening to the previous speaker I think that if the bill is as important as he makes out, then we had better look at it again.

It seems to me the minister should give an explanation of why he needs this information. Surely the information should be fairly familiar to his department already. They must know what is available in this country, and the reasons why what is not available must be imported. If they do not know this, then I agree with the previous speaker that they are not going to provide the type of information that will enable the minister to decide what should or should not be developed in Canada.

I should like to ask the minister if the bill will solve a small problem that I raised about a year ago. A small company was manufacturing a product and found it necessary to import an adhesive it needed from the United States. It had discussed its needs with senior officials of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and tried the adhesives that the department recommended but none was satisfactory. It then applied for a permit to import the adhesive free for excise tax so that it would be competitive.