

of dealing with it now. I think he will welcome this opportunity in view of the remarks made this afternoon by the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario when he referred to the difficulty that certain businessmen met when approaching the government with their problems and the new situation in which they found themselves.

I recommended to the minister that he should call to Ottawa some of those in the country who are skilled in commerce and export and import matters. I recommended that he consult with boards of trade and chambers of commerce in Canada. The minister has said that prior to the bringing in of this measure they had no opportunity to do that, but I ask him what action he or his departmental officials have taken, since the bringing in of this measure, to consult these experts in the country.

Mr. ABBOTT: That is extremely easy to answer. I think on the average I personally see at least six or seven representative delegations in the course of a week. Today I had a delegation from brush manufacturers and I have had delegations from electrical manufacturers, furniture manufacturers and others. I think it is fair to say that I see at least ten or twelve delegations a week. They come to my office with extremely well prepared briefs which outline the problems of their particular industry. Of course I receive them with my customary courtesy and I listen to their stories. I am very glad to have these representations made.

In addition to the delegations that I see, the officials of the emergency import control division and other officers of the Department of National Revenue or the other departments of government concerned with the administration of this program see literally hundreds of representatives of business and industry. I think it will be found that the reception which these Canadians received was sympathetic and considerate. My friend, the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario shakes his head—

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): He was agreeing with you.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): On a question of privilege, I was agreeing with the minister. I am sure that the minister was so courteous that he made it as painless as it could be made.

Mr. ABBOTT: I thought the hon. member was shaking his head from side to side and not up and down. I apologize to him. Speaking personally, and I know that this applies to the officers of the department, representa-

tions from organizations such as my hon. friend has suggested are not only welcomed, but are necessary for the effective administration of any law of this kind. They are the same sort of thing that I get month after month during the year with respect to matters which affect the budget. That is the way in which our system works.

Boards of trade, chambers of commerce and trade groups of one kind and another are constantly making representations to the government. I can assure my hon. friend that he need have no concern over the reluctance of organized groups of this kind to bring their cases fully and clearly before the government. I am glad that they do, and he need feel no concern over the fact that the points of view of all groups are not fairly presented to the government.

Mr. SKEY: I am sure that many in the country will be pleased to know that they are so welcome in Ottawa and will always receive the sympathetic and non-political treatment which they appear to be getting.

However, I should like to come to the other side of this question. This is an emergency exchange measure. When I spoke before, I asked the minister if he had consulted those in the country who were skilled in exchange matters. We have the minister's answer with regard to import and trade groups, but what about those skilled in finance and exchange? Has the minister interviewed the bankers' association or representatives of the Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver stock exchanges? Has he met with the boards of directors of any of the banks? Are they in agreement with the action the government has taken in this case?

Mr. ABBOTT: Fortunately in this country we still follow the principle of responsible government. The government does not have its policy determined by this House of Commons, by the bankers' association, by the trades and labour congress or by any other special group.

Mr. SKEY: That is not the question.

Mr. ABBOTT: Let me make that perfectly clear.

Mr. SKEY: I was referring just to consultation.

Mr. ABBOTT: That is all right. The government is always willing to listen to the representations of any group in this country that may be interested either in promoting the public welfare or in promoting its own particular interests. That is part of our system and ministers of the crown and the government are always ready to listen to