

whether or not pre-cooked, with or without admixture. I have some problem with the terminology. Does this include all potatoes? Potatoes in their natural state are not mentioned as such. The tariff item only states: potatoes, frozen, whether or not pre-cooked. The "not" applies to "pre-cooked", and not to potatoes in their natural state or transformed, modified as such. I should like the parliamentary secretary to indicate to the House whether this tariff item includes potatoes in their natural state or merely modified potatoes. Is this a mistake? Does this item include all potatoes?

[English]

Mr. Ritchie (York East): Mr. Chairman, the item applies only to frozen potatoes.

[Translation]

Mr. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has just said that this item applies to potatoes only. And I quote:

[English]

To frozen potatoes only?

Mr. Ritchie (York East): Yes.

Mr. Corbin: That answers my question.
Schedule I agreed to.
Schedules II to V inclusive agreed to.
Title agreed to.

● (1650)

Bill reported.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott, Victoria-Haliburton): When shall the bill be read the third time?

Mr. Knowles: By leave, now.

Hon. James A. McGrath (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I should like to congratulate the parliamentary secretary on his dexterity and facility in handling this bill. I do not wish to say much more about it, except that for many producers of agricultural commodities the tariff protection in the past has been negligible. If there had been a more successful application of duties, we would have a better fruit and vegetable industry than is the case at the present. In this country we have been willing to pave much of the area which formerly grew fruit and we have been willing to develop factories in areas that successfully grew vegetables because of weather conditions, but, Mr. Speaker, we are going to pay one hell of a price in the future for this.

I am not sure that the application of duties could have prevented some of the things that have happened. Many of them have come about as the result of irresponsibility on the part of governments designating agricultural lands for other purposes. In Canada, the amount of land that will grow fruits and vegetables is very limited and has not been well husband-

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ed. If it had been, we would have an expanding industry rather than a declining industry. We have become dependent on imports of many commodities instead of finding Canadian substitutes for them. As an example, surely we could substitute some of the juices we produce in Canada for those we import from Florida. Maybe we would not have the same advertising agents as the Florida orange juices, but I am sure we could find our vitamin C in a Canadian product.

In many cases it is already too late but we are entering a totally new field of development in this country now and using resources that have never been used before for the production of agricultural products. Heat, as a by-product that has been a pollution factor in many industries, including the nuclear power plants and thermal power plants, can possibly be harnessed to develop a hot house industry that would produce many of the commodities we now import. This new industry, as well as the old, would have to be provided with enough protection to enable it to compete with other countries.

Mexico has the advantage of producing four field crops of tomatoes per year to our one. This puts us in a very difficult situation. I do not suggest we should increase our tariff structure to meet that requirement, but I do suggest that we use it to help our food industry. We should depend more on what we can grow ourselves and less upon what our neighbours may want to give us from their surplus production.

I am not sure what the changes we have made to this legislation today will do. I am not really sure how they apply or when they apply, and I do not think anybody else is sure either. This is not to say that I feel less qualified to read and understand the bill than someone else, but just that I think we really do not know how it will work. If it is successful, it will apply in a different way from one year to another.

I hope its application means that we will be able to protect some of the food industry. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether I am a free trader or whether I want a high tariff. The only reason I am particularly interested in the bill and its application to agriculture is that I do not think we can gamble with agricultural production any longer. It is absolutely essential that Canada reach self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. I think we damn well can do it with vegetables and soft fruits, but our record has been one of decreased production rather than increased. British Columbia may be more self-sufficient than the rest of the country. I know that every time I go into that most favoured part of Ontario where there is the climate and the soil necessary to produce the commodities that cost so much in the store, I am aware that it cannot compete with the price of imports from the United States and Mexico.

We should take steps to ensure that our producers get a fair break, and I hope this bill will bring that result. If it does not, then our children and their children will be faced with a scarcity of those commodities that we should be able to grow in profusion if only we managed our resources better than in the past.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.