

Customs Tariff

Mr. Lapierre: It is tariff item number 49105-1 on page 21.

Mr. Lanthier: I am delighted, Mr. Chairman. This is the first time I have been asked a question about engineering in the House. I feel right at home.

This item belongs to the broad class of goods that are either manufactured or not manufactured in Canada. This particular item is considered not to be manufactured in Canada.

I might add, in passing, that as far as the engineering aspect is concerned, steel tanks now tend to be welded instead of bolted.

This is an item that existed previously and it has now been included in the class of goods either manufactured or not manufactured in Canada.

Mr. Lapierre: About the same item, I was wondering whether there is any connection with the kind of containers required for heavy water, for instance? Is this technology used for heavy water containers?

Mr. Lanthier: Though I cannot vouch for it, and as I said before, it is more a matter of engineering than anything else.

According to my knowledge of engineering, all heavy water containers are usually welded. Now, with due respect, the Hon. Member is asking me about a very specific question. If he is agreeable, I shall make enquiries at Customs and Excise and give the Hon. Member his answer in writing in due time.

Mr. Lapierre: I think the Parliamentary Secretary is asking me to buy a pig in a poke. If this is passed and I get a written reply in two months, the Bill will have become law by then, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I notice quite a few items and that surprises me. You say that no company in Canada makes surveying instruments, among other things. Your argument would also apply to instruments, hearing aids and similar items, yet as far as I know I thought Bell Canada for instance was also a leader in hearing aids technology. I would like to follow your line of reasoning.

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Chairman, all tariff items listed here have been reduced after inquiries and consultations with the private sector. Canada's entire private sector has been made aware of the fact that we were about to establish new tariff item numbers or to adapt the new numbers to current conditions. So if you have cases which were not considered by the technical or consultation committees that had been established I would suggest it is a bit late to raise the matter. There have been specific consultations, ongoing consultations with respect to the questions I examined in the Bill and those people who had representations to make were welcome. But now we have to make a decision today.

• (1710)

The Deputy Chairman: The Hon. Member for Papineau.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I read with care the speech delivered the day before yesterday by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance in his opening comments on the Bill. He referred particularly to the Quebec Summit where the Prime Minister was very chummy with the President of the United States. I refer more specifically to page 6868 of *Hansard* where he said: "The Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States decided among other trading initiatives to put an end to protectionism in the exchange of goods and services between our two countries."

Does that mean that from now on large American engineering firms may compete on the Canadian market against Canadian companies? We know, Mr. Speaker, that Canada is very much at the forefront as far as engineering is concerned. Our prominent Canadian architects and engineers have no lessons to learn from any other firm.

Of course, our large firms do not have the financial resources nor the organization of some large American engineering firms and I am somewhat concerned following the speech made last Monday by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, because indeed I am wondering whether his Prime Minister did not sell himself off bound hand and foot not only in areas such as Star Wars but also in one area which was then overlooked, yet is most important, namely Canadian technology as developed by large firms of architects and engineers in Canada.

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to put things in the proper context. It is not necessarily my Prime Minister, but the Prime Minister of all Canadians as well as your own, my Hon. friend. He is everyone's Prime Minister.

Second, I would have liked him to have quoted my words properly. I said "our valiant Prime Minister". I do not know if this was heard, but I said "our valiant Prime Minister".

To come back to the essence of this question, without speaking about free trade, but only about the issue under consideration, the agreements which have been concluded have not been blank checks, to use an expression that is very dear to Members Opposite. These are agreements in principle which will be phased in and include terms that take into account the production of goods and services in both countries.

You mentioned a specific issue. There are much more vulnerable areas in Canada than our engineering firms which have competed throughout the world. In this sector, Canada has proportionately the largest and best established firms there are. In fact, I believe that we shall now have to get ready to compete against the major American firms. As for not having