

Customs Tariff

is cheaper in Japan, transportation costs included, than in the United States. Why? Because people are paid less in Japan than in the United States.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Here, in Canada, labour unions are demanding wage parity with workers in the United States. They are asking for the same conditions as those which exist in a country with a population of 200 million. Labour leaders who talk about wage parity with workers in the United States have their head in the clouds; they are not being realistic.

If we could produce like the United States, as much and as quickly as they do, the problem would be solved, but that is a physical impossibility. We must therefore face the facts and learn to be ourselves. Our population is 20 million, not 200 million people. The union leaders should understand that once and for all.

We must realize that we are not the United States. Let us organize ourselves according to our own possibilities, in order to meet the needs of our own trade and our domestic market. Let us face the fact that we will probably have to sell our surplus production below cost, as I said earlier.

However, we will then perhaps be able to help the underdeveloped and poor countries of the world, since two-thirds of the people in the world are in need. We would then be able to give free assistance to these people. I do not object to our giving free aid, once the principle of "Charity begins at home" is applied in Canada by the Canadian government.

Let us begin by meeting the needs of our own people. There is much poverty in Canada. The government is introducing programs to fight poverty as effectively as possible. The best way to fight poverty is to give something to eat to those who are hungry, something to drink to those who are thirsty, to give housing to those who need it and clothes to those who have none. It is as simple as that and we have all these things in Canada. Therefore, there is no need to go to Japan or to the United States.

However, that does not prevent us, once again, from doing business with others. But let us do so while remembering that our first duty is to work towards an economic system which will guarantee without superhuman efforts the just society which we have heard about for the last couple of years, and which will fight efficiently, not the poor but poverty,

[Mr. Caouette.]

to get the poor out of the hole in which they are at the present time. And if they are now in a poor situation, they are not responsible for it but we are as members of parliament. Therefore, it is up to us to pass legislation which will guarantee respect for the human person everywhere in Canada and to see to it that we transact our business under the best possible terms with the other countries so that Canada may continue to expand and become an example for all the countries of the world.

[English]

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Béchard in the chair.

The Chairman: Order, please. House in committee of the whole on Bill C-131, to amend the Customs Tariff.

On clause 1—

Mr. Gray: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could start by saying a few words about the structure of the bill we are now studying and conclude by dealing with some of the points raised by hon. members during the second reading. I will also attempt to answer the questions that I reserved for this stage during the debate on the resolution. I should explain that each clause of this bill flows directly from the corresponding paragraphs of the budget resolution relating to the Customs Tariff. You will recall that this resolution was examined in some detail and passed by the committee of ways and means after debate on November 14 and 19. There is no change whatsoever in the substance of the provisions which appeared in some detail in the resolution in question. However, the order in which they appear has been rearranged so that in the bill the various clauses and schedules are in the same order as the related provisions of the Customs Tariff Act which they amend.

The Customs Tariff Act, which the bill we are considering amends, commences with an interpretation section. It continues with sections imposing rates of duties set out in schedule A thereto and empowering the governor in council to make regulations. Next come the three schedules. The first of these is schedule A enumerating goods subject to duty and free goods. If you look at the original Customs Tariff Act you will see it is very long. It is followed by two shorter schedules, schedule B providing for certain drawbacks of duty and schedule C containing a list of goods prohibited from importation. Therefore