

Customs Tariff

Mr. Sinclair: The change in tariff from an ad valorem to a specific duty on most vegetables has met with the approval of the growers across Canada. The problem of timing is a most important one. The hon. member for York West raised it. The matter of timing as to the period, if it is a split period, a hot-house period and a field period, or if it is only a field period, cannot be spelled out in the statutes because it depends entirely on the weather. I am informed that the growers and the Department of Agriculture work very closely together. There are other people who have to be considered, however, and I refer to consumers. It obviously would be very much in the interest of the growers to have a higher specific tariff imposed at a very early period, at a time perhaps when they could not supply Canadian demand. There is that factor, and it is probably responsible for the compromise which the hon. member mentioned.

As for the application of the dumping duty, this legislation in no way changes the authority of the government to apply such duties on these fruits and vegetables if it is established that the produce is being dumped in Canada. This is a tariff arrangement for the ordinary everyday trade where there is an ad valorem duty for the period outside the designated weeks and then a specific duty spelled out in the schedule for the restricted period. Before this amendment we had a split period authorized for only cabbage, carrots and beets. That is now extended to cover green beans, cabbage, carrots, beets, cauliflower, celery and lettuce.

Mr. Coldwell: I am glad the parliamentary assistant spoke of the interest of the consumer. This indicates very clearly what a difficult country Canada is for which to provide arrangements of this sort, and I think it is a good thing that this can apply to various ports across the country, which of course minimizes the difficulty for many consumers. Those of us who come from the prairie provinces, for example, where we have not these early supplies of vegetables and fruits, cannot get supplies from any source except Utah, Texas and other places south of the line, and we would be penalized if this were applied generally. I just rose to say that in listening to the moderate and well-stated representations of hon. gentlemen who come from districts where these things can be obtained, the interests of the people of the prairie provinces, who might be adversely affected if this were applied too generally across the country, should not be forgotten. I just wanted to remind the parliamentary assistant—from what he said I thought probably he might have had it in mind, but I felt it should be

put on the record—that the interests of people in other parts of Canada have to be considered when this matter is being dealt with.

Mr. Hatfield: The parliamentary assistant has not answered my question as to why we have to pay a duty of 75 cents per hundred pounds on potatoes going into the United States while their potatoes come in here free of duty. Why should that be?

Mr. Sinclair: There are many of these tariff problems between nations, where the tariff is not the same going both ways. I am told that we have permitted free entry of potatoes into Canada for many years, except for the production period.

Mr. Hatfield: We used to have an ad valorem duty, in which I believe. We should have the same duty they have on all goods.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I want to refer to the question of ports of entry. There is a difference, which may not be important, between the wording of the resolution and the wording of the bill. The resolution speaks of goods imported through ports in a specified region or part of Canada, and so on; the reference is to a region. In the section itself the wording is different. It says:

Provided that where, before the coming into operation of such an order, a person purchased goods for importation through a port specified in the order—

Can we have a word as to what these regions are, or what the ports are? The hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar has pointed out how important that is.

Mr. Sinclair: As far as the administration of this act is concerned, of course that is done at the border through these border ports; that is why the word "ports" is used to spell out the regions. Those regions are generally the maritimes, Quebec and Ontario, the prairies and British Columbia; and the ports in those areas are the ports in the regions. The actual instruction in the end will have to apply to ports, because the customs and excise officials at those ports are the people who actually have to enforce the law.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Then does it really mean that there are just four groups of ports, in other words that the minister just deals with the maritimes, Quebec and Ontario, the prairies and British Columbia? I take it that under this he has authority to fix different times at different places, or to leave one out altogether?

Mr. Sinclair: That is quite right. He has that authority, but he exercises that as a