

### *Customs Tariff*

to ask the question whether or not today's discussion ought to be taking place at this time. Even though it is a technical Bill, changing the tariffs as they are applied to a variety of commodities, is this a time for discussion when we consider that we lack an over-all comprehensive trade policy? When we lack an over-all trade policy, one asks what the context is in which we are making these changes.

When we get into committee, we will ask why we want to place a tariff on hand-rolled cigars. The question itself might sound trite but there are hundreds of questions like this. Presumably, in a comprehensive trade package, we are trying to protect something in Canada. Perhaps there is a hand-rolled cigar industry in Canada we are trying to protect, but I am not aware of one. If there is such a fledgling industry which needs some protection in its early days, let us find out about it.

When we look through the list, Mr. Speaker, we find pages and pages of items such as mining equipment and agricultural equipment tariff free. The recommendation is that we should import all of the mining processing equipment Canada needs. On a global scale, Canada is a major mining country. Is it in our interests to continue to import all of the machinery and equipment used in mining? Should we not be an exporter of much of this equipment and machinery?

**Mr. de Jong:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Riis:** Of course, we should, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps, then, if there is a case to be made in terms of an over-all comprehensive industrial strategy, with a complementary customs and trade strategy, it might make sense to have a tariff on some mining equipment sectors. However, these things are difficult to evaluate, Mr. Speaker; rolled cigars, hearing aids, knives, filters, and so on, without any context on which to base this evaluation.

We are less than enthusiastic about simply accepting this Bill as a technical Bill and falling all over ourselves to pass it. We want to get it into committee. We want to take it item by item. I have no hesitation in believing that the Hon. Member means what he says when he says this is a technical Bill, but we hear this from Minister after Minister. The then Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said a few days ago, "Don't worry, I've checked it. I've eaten the tuna. There is nothing to worry about. I've overruled all of the scientists who evaluated it. Have faith in me". Then the Minister of State for Finance says, "Don't worry about the meetings which took place in Washington on the weekend. They are just going to devalue the American currency relative to ours which will result in a possible loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs. But don't worry. Have faith. We know what we are doing". We were told to have faith when the *Polar Sea* invaded our territorial waters and the Americans forgot to ask our permission. We were told that would be sorted out. There is too much "loosey goosey" going on.

We are able to find \$1 billion—which, described in another way, is a thousand million dollars—to bail out a couple of banks, without debating the merits of that decision. Over a weekend the Government committed itself and the taxpayers

of Canada to a thousand million dollars. If we look at this Bill in that context, we feel strongly that we want to debate these minor areas, even though when we consider the kinds of topics and issues before this country today, when we consider the kinds of issues which Parliament should be discussing, we really wonder about the wisdom of spending hours and hours deciding whether hearing aids should be duty free or receive an 8 per cent tariff.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that we should get this into committee as soon as we can and deal with it very carefully in order to ensure that the Government is not pulling a fast one on us, as we have seen too many times before. We should get on, Mr. Speaker, with addressing some of the real important issues facing the people of this country.

**Mr. de Jong:** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague is aware that one of the items which will now be duty free are manure spreaders, not the ones which are hand-pushed but ones, I would suppose, more mechanized. I wonder if the Hon. Member has any idea why the Government wants cheaper manure spreaders in this country? Does the Hon. Member believe that some of the political mistakes of this Government have to be spread around so, therefore, cheaper manure spreaders are now being called for?

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I must admit I have not had an opportunity to delve into the manure spreader category of the Bill but the point he makes is an important one. There are sectors of our economy where we should be giving every bit of encouragement for their development. In a country where agriculture plays such an important role in providing food-stuffs for the hungry people, to develop a sound agriculture machine industry is something we could be proud of over the years. Some of the greatest technological innovations in agriculture machinery have been developed right here in Canada. For obvious reasons, Mr. Speaker, it is an area where we should excel. It is an area where we should be on the cutting edge of technological change, whether manure spreaders, combines or whatever. Perhaps some assistance in developing new parts of that industry for a few years in terms of a tariff imposed by the Government makes good sense. Again, it would only make good sense in the context of an over-all export policy. We are, of course, lacking that at the moment. In fact, we have always lacked that. This sort of simplistic mind set of free trade with the U.S. which some people have been voicing is certainly not the way to develop a comprehensive trade policy which would benefit Canadians.

● (1620)

My colleague from Regina raises a good point and points out even more the need for a logical, comprehensive and thoughtful approach to the development of a sound tariff and customs policy.

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, the last question and answer are what brought me to my feet. For many years the chassis of fertilizing machines and other equipment which aided the production of food came into the country tariff-free. In the last