

Customs Tariff

I would urge the minister to encourage his officials who are responsible for the application and administration of this act to get together with agricultural representatives of various organizations, beef producer groups and stock growers, and work out some meaningful, uniform and equitable application of these tariff items. In this way we could be assured of a continuous supply of these items to meet our needs. In view of the condition of the cattle industry at this time, there is no need for further strangulation. These are cost items which occur in the over-all financial position of beef producers in this country. I hope I have the support of the minister and his parliamentary secretary, who I know is very interested in this particular proposal. I hope they will render unto the cattle industry a certain amount of sympathy in order that these anomalies might be resolved, rectified or corrected.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, the hon. gentleman has a point. There are anomalies. As a matter of fact, when you get down to individual items you find tariff inconsistencies in various sections. Tariffs, in general terms, should represent logical instruments, but many of these tariffs are the result of international negotiation and bargaining. In respect of some of the agricultural implements the hon. member is talking about, we have a situation in which the entry of many Canadian-manufactured goods to the United States is tougher than the entry into Canada. We are hopeful of remedying some of these anomalies at the forthcoming negotiations at Geneva. When we review the agricultural implements sections we will not only keep in mind what the hon. gentleman has suggested, but will try to add some logic to the negotiations. I think the hon. member should be quite happy and satisfied as a member of parliament in that he will go down in history as the man who convinced the Department of Finance that a corral is a pen or a pen is a corral, depending on which way you argue, the geography and the size.

Having regard to air conditioners for combines, the lack of consistency here relates to the same problem, in that this is one of the items for negotiation at the coming tariff negotiations. I am led to believe by my officials here who are listening to what members of the committee have to say and will take due note of their comments at the next review, that air conditioners for combines are covered by the machinery program and the Customs duty is remitted since the advisory board considers that these devices are not available from Canadian production.

The problem arises when you have the importation of only one or two air conditioners at a time, in that they do not or might not qualify for a remission of duty since the machinery program does not provide for remission of the first \$500 in value of goods covered by the application for remission. When the air conditioner comes in on a machine, there is no problem; but when it comes in as an individual item that is where the inconsistency arises. As my parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton, said yesterday, we have directed our officials to review this matter, to report back and to consider it at the negotiations under GATT.

Mr. Roche: Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring the minister's attention back to the subject of handicraft items which we discussed to some extent yesterday, so

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

much so that I asked the parliamentary secretary how important the question of handicraft items was in that we were spending so much time on it. During the excellent presentation which the parliamentary secretary gave yesterday afternoon, on the minister's behalf, in response to the point I raised, he said that the subject of handicraft items was a small or insignificant factor in over-all trade relations with developing countries. He went on to say that many other products are of more importance and of more direct concern in our trade relations with developing countries, and of much more importance in terms of helping the developing countries. I can only assume from the minister's supplementary comments today on the subject of handicraft items that the motivation behind Canada taking these steps is one of helping developing countries.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Certainly. And the more flexible, they are, the more helpful they are.

Mr. Roche: As the minister knows very well, it is extremely important, in helping developing countries, that we consider better ways in which they can plug into international trade and monetary systems. Let me suggest that the time we spend talking about handicraft items is time wasted as compared to time spent discussing the real emergency in the world today caused by events which supersede trade in importance, namely, the recycling of petro-dollars. Yesterday the minister brought to the House the communiqué issued following his chairmanship of the interim committee in Washington which examined the international monetary situation. That communiqué emphasized the need for decisive action to help the developing countries most seriously affected by high oil prices. As the minister knows, the committee agreed to set up a special fund to reduce interest payments on oil paid by those developing countries, to which appropriate contributions should be made by oil exporting and industrial nations.

Let me suggest to the minister, in relation to the items of trade and tariffs for developing countries that we have before us, that it would be better if the minister brought in concrete proposals reflecting Canada's position in response to this call by the interim committee for this fund, and an assurance that Canadian response to that call will be such that our contribution to the fund will assist in strengthening the developing countries. I urge, therefore, that we quickly consider these items which I suggest are time-consuming. We could make a much more substantial contribution to the developing countries, especially those most affected by the oil crisis, by strengthening and improving international financial mechanisms, for which the International Monetary Fund has been asking. I would ask the minister to respond to that point.

● (1600)

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I am very pleased to respond to the hon. member's question. With regard to the over-all picture, the hon. member is perfectly right. However, in a good many of these countries, handicrafts are a means of bringing in family income and they provide more self-sufficiency at the family and village level.

As to the wider picture, Canada supported the initiative of the managing director of the fund in providing a vehicle