

Perhaps the only clause the House will care to discuss is the first. No explanation appears upon the Bill, and therefore I will read the clause. This is the addition to the present Act:

(9) (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, the Governor in Council may, from time to time and as occasion requires, order and direct, subject to such exceptions as may be made, what shall be the rate of exchange fixed for any currency in computing the value for duty of goods imported into Canada from any place or country the currency of which is depreciated, and in case a sum in Canadian currency less than the invoice value of the goods in the currency of the place or country of export, computed at the rate of exchange so ordered, be paid for the goods, the actual selling price of the goods to the importer shall be regarded as less than the fair market value of the goods when sold for home consumption, and the provisions of this section shall apply and special or dumping duty shall apply equal to the difference between the value of the invoice computed at the current rate of exchange or at the average current rate from time to time fixed by order of the Governor in Council, and the value of such invoice, computed at the rate of exchange for duty so ordered as aforesaid, or may be less than such difference as the Governor in Council may from time to time order and direct—

—and so forth.

In substance it is in effect now and has been for many years. It is an addition to, and in some degree a restatement of, the power of fixing value for duty purposes of goods imported from countries whose currencies are depreciated in relation to our own. As honourable members are aware, unless this is done the major effect of the application of the tariff to such imports is entirely nullified; in fact in many cases it is more than nullified and the result is really that there is a bonus on importations as against the Canadian producer. These problems have arisen owing to the disturbed state of world exchanges. They have to be met, and, in part, they have been met from time to time. So far as this section is concerned, it is merely an adjustment to meet the conditions that have more lately arisen.

The main part of the Bill consists of the customs tariff amendments as passed in the other House. Relatively to the whole tariff the amendments are not numerous, but were this the House of Commons, consideration of these amendments item by item would constitute a formidable task.

Hon. Mr. McLENNAN: That part of the section in relation to sales or consignments of goods imported when importer and exporter have joint ownership or operate under a holding company is new, I believe.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: It is new as far as I know.

Hon. Mr. McLENNAN: It will mean extra revenue and is therefore a good provision.

Hon. Mr. McRAE: What is the reason for the retroactive feature in paragraph c?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: This is the law as it has been applied, and it is sought to confirm and legalize the application.

Hon. Mr. McRAE: It is not the intention to revalue?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: No.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: Action is by Order in Council, not by a single minister?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Order in Council.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: That is an improvement. Will the new Tariff Commission have anything to say as to these changes?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, the Commission will have everything to say in so far as relates to further changes.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: Not retroactively?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Not retroactively. I see many items are made free.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: Of course, we are perfectly at liberty to discuss the details of any measure for the benefit of the country at large. I think quite often we should do well to discuss certain measures, even if we did not feel at liberty to alter details to any great extent. I find as I travel around that the public are paying a good deal of attention to the debates in the Senate. Sometimes we miss an opportunity of placing our views before the country, simply because of our reluctance to discuss matters which some person thinks are not within our purview. It has been the practice, of course, not to review tariff bills unless they contained something of particular interest that we felt ought to be discussed.

It strikes me that the chief objection to the Bill is that it is nearly all in one sentence of fifty-five lines. With my limited education, it is beyond me to follow intelligently the predicates, adverbs and adjectives to find out just what this long sentence implies. I wish the gentlemen who draft our laws would keep their sentences within such bounds that the intellect of the ordinary person could grasp the meaning of their language.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.