

Customs Tariff

year. Parts II, III, IV, clauses 11 to 13, amend these multilateral trade agreement acts. They became effective October 24. Part V provides for implementation of these provisions above.

I might add that we will have to deal with a great deal of legislation which comes out of the MTN negotiations, the Tokyo Round so-called, which we will be introducing in this House later in the fall, I trust. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done in drafting the changes that come about from the MTN and other legislation associated with it that deal with non-tariff issues negotiated in the Tokyo Round.

I hope hon. members will be supportive of this legislation and we can get it through quickly so that we can go on with the other matters that will lie before us as the session progresses. Therefore, I move second reading.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) completed debate on third reading of the bill to implement the income tax changes from the last budget, he was good enough to admit he did not know what he was doing. This frankness is really most uncommon but is quite commendable on his part. On the other hand, one has to say that in speaking on behalf of, and giving his enthusiastic support to, the provisions of Bill C-18, to some extent, at least, he does know what he is doing because he is telling the House that he wishes it to adopt the changes in the customs tariff recommended to this House by the previous government before the last election.

Once again I have to note that the first answer of the new government to the request from the public, as expressed during the election, for some type of new direction and economic policy has been to bring again before the House the budget measures presented by the Liberals before the election. One can conclude, as we on this side have, that this demonstrates that the arguments of the Conservative party before and during the election, that they had some clear idea about the needs of the country and some new ideas to deal with it were not in fact correct. Here we have this new government, as its first major economic measure, asking this House to adopt the budget of the previous Liberal government.

● (1600)

As the minister pointed out, the major change proposed in this bill is to bring about the implementation of changes in the tariff on fruits and vegetables as recommended largely, although not entirely, by a report of the tariff board. This report was published after lengthy consideration by the tariff board. As I recall, that consideration included a number of public hearings and representations not only from the Canadian horticultural industry but from food processors and at least one consumer group as well.

The recommendations of the tariff board report, as adopted in large part by the previous government and presented to this House in the ways and means motion before the election, represented an attempt to find some fair balance between the requirements of both producers and consumers. While one can debate various aspects of the changes in the tariff as presented,

[Mr. Crosbie.]

the objective of the previous government, as supported by the new government, to achieve a balance between the requirements of both producers and consumers has been carried out in large measure in the bill before us.

I am not going to take the time to review in any detail at this point the very technical provisions of the bill. I think Committee of the Whole is a more suitable forum for that type of debate. In any event, the important thing is that this new Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) is urging this House to adopt the bill having said, if I recall his words correctly, that the measures have his enthusiastic support.

We will not be prolonging unduly the consideration of this bill. We want the government to get on with the presentation to this House of its own budget. We want the government to present to this House its own ideas, if it has any, on what changes should be made in the income tax law of this country and what changes should be made in the customs and sales tax law in order better to reflect the needs of this country and its people.

We do not want to give even the appearance of an excuse for delaying the bringing into this House of a new budget by this new Conservative government. We want to see how this government is carrying out the responsibilities which it sought so actively from the Canadian people during the election. During that time they asked for the support of the Canadian people on the basis of a whole lot of very specific promises as to what they would do to help the Canadian economy.

So far we have seen only an abandonment of this government's promises and the carrying out—and this is something I do not quarrel with up to a point—of the policies of the preceding government. The new government has failed to recognize that while the measures of the preceding budget were very useful at the time they were presented and continue to be useful, changed circumstances, such as the OPEC oil price increase, the confirmation of the recession in the United States, the beginnings of the economic downturn in our own country, all require new measures to counteract, at least to some extent, the negative effects of these developments and to help the Canadian economy to be put on a new and necessary course based on the adoption of an industrial strategy. We need a program which, while it requires government leadership, also requires a high degree of co-operation between business and labour. It would have to be a program which tackles at long last the structural problems of our economy, including the high degree of foreign control over our economy, a situation which has good points but the bad points of which have been increasingly recognized in recent years.

The minister said that this bill will continue in force numerous temporary tariff items which would otherwise have expired in June of this year. He is asking the House to continue these temporary tariff items in force until such time as he presents to the House a bill to implement the results of the latest General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations which were made public a few months ago.

I hope in winding up this debate or in Committee of the Whole the minister will tell us exactly when he is going to