

*Customs Tariff*

from the Atlantic provinces there are fishermen whose main income is derived from the sale of salt codfish.

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order. It is all right for the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillington to make a passing reference to that matter, but it is not all right for him to go on and make a budget speech on the fisheries.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I am not making a budget speech. I am explaining, as surely is my right, why I am opposed to the passing of this item and why I intend to vote against it. I consider that to increase the tariff on wool against the British is a very bad thing in itself. I will say something more about that, though I cannot add much to what was said so admirably by the Leader of the Opposition on that point. But I say this is just part of the policy, this is just the prelude to an increase in the most favoured nation rate against a country which is an essential market for our primary producers. The only excuse the tariff board could find was that this industry had social significance. I sympathize with the hon. member for Waterloo South, and so does every decent Canadian sympathize with any hon. member who represents a constituency which is being adversely affected by the general economic policies of the present government.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Ricard:** What did you do to prevent it? You did nothing.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** And this government is doing nothing at all. In earlier days, as was quite correctly pointed out, many more people were employed than there are now. I sympathize with the hon. member—

**Mr. Ricard:** It started to go down under a Liberal government.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** As I say, anyone who has any humanitarianism at all sympathizes with anybody in any part of this country who wants to work and is unemployed through no fault of his own. It is important that something be done to meet this unemployment problem. But the tariff board itself indicates that this increase will not meet the problem. The government says it is very insignificant; it cannot really have any effect on anything in Canada, but the external effects are going to be very serious indeed.

**Mr. Anderson:** May I ask the hon. member a question?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Yes.

**Mr. Anderson:** Does the hon. member not recall that the cutback in the big mill from 2,500 happened during the regime of the former government?

**An hon. Member:** What is the question?

**Mr. Anderson:** My question was, does he not remember that this happened during the time of his government?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Of course everyone is well aware of what the hon. member for Waterloo South has pointed out. Everybody is well aware of the fact that the textile industry in North America, not merely in Canada, has been going through very difficult times. It was for this reason my friend Mr. Harris, when he was minister of finance, made the original reference to the tariff board. I might point out to the hon. member for Waterloo South that the tariff board itself admits that this recommendation will do nothing effective to help this industry, but it will have the indirect effect, if it has any effect at all, of increasing costs to consumers and of jeopardizing markets for many of our most important raw materials such as fish and wheat.

**Mr. Pallett:** Have you looked at the recent trade figures?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I listened patiently to the hon. gentleman speak for his constituents, as is his right, and I speak now for mine who will be affected not in one way, if the government carries out this policy, but in two ways. In the first place, like other Canadian consumers they will have to pay more for their woollens, and fishermen are consumers of woollens. They will have to pay more for what they buy, but they will have to go on selling in a market where we can give them no tariff protection, a market which is threatened by this very policy.

That is the point I am trying to make, that by embarking upon this policy, this protectionist policy, this restrictionist policy, this policy calculated to stop imports into Canada, the government is inevitably going to provoke retaliation which is going to affect primary producers who cannot, in the nature of things, be given any kind of special help through the tariff.

It does seem to me that this would be bad enough if it were going to be effective. When the tariff board admits that it is not going to be effective, that it is not really going to accomplish anything, it does seem to me that we are being asked here to do something which will—well, I cannot for the life of me understand why the government is asking us to do it. It may be that they feel