

[Translation]

OPPOSITION TO TAX ON FOOD

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling petitions from my constituents in the riding of Papineau who have heard the Conservative Government is about to impose a special tax on food. Obviously, my constituents object to a measure that would have a very harmful impact on the elderly, large families, the unemployed and low- and middle-income Canadians who are already forced to spend a substantial part of their income on food. They are asking the Government not to go ahead with this proposal.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 217 will be answered today.

[Text]

CIPW STRIKE RELATED COSTS

Question No. 217—**Mr. Caccia:**

1. During the postal strike from September 30 to October 16, 1987 what were the costs incurred by Canada Post Corporation for (a) salaries paid to scab workers (b) helicopters (c) buses for transporting scab workers (d) purchase of food for scab workers who had to remain in plants longer than regular shifts for safety reasons?

2. What amount did Canada Post Corporation pay regular workers for overtime over the first seven days following the end of the strike?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): The Canada Post Corporation informs me as follows:

The information requested is currently not available. Information relating to expenses incurred during the postal strike from September 30 to October 16, 1987 will be reflected in the Corporation's next Annual Report which will be released at the end of the 1987-88 fiscal year.

[Translation]

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question enumerated by the Parliamentary Secretary has been answered. Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Customs Tariff

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CUSTOMS TARIFF

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-87, an Act respecting the imposition of duties of customs and other charges, to give effect to the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, to provide relief against the imposition of certain duties of customs or other charges, to provide for other related matters and to amend or repeal certain Acts in consequence thereof, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (for Mr. Cassidy) moved:
Motion No. 15

That Bill C-87, be amended in Clause 39 by adding, immediately after line 6 at page 54, the following:

(3) Where a tariff and Schedule I is charged as a consequence of an order or regulation made under this section, no additional amount of tariff shall be levied on any good which is imported between the date of coming into force of this act and the date of the order or regulation made under this section.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Motion No. 15 is to eliminate the retroactivity component in the Bill.

Because the harmonized system has been developed over a number of years and is complex by its nature and may well have some adverse and unforeseen effects on certain industries, the Government is giving itself the power, through Clause 139, to change the new tariffs in Schedules I and II for a period of 18 months on a retroactive basis until January 1, 1989.

Some importers continue to complain that this may mean that they could retroactively face a significant increase in tariffs after they have, in good faith, imported goods, paid the tariff that was in force at that time, and then sold those goods at a price which was based on the tariff that was in force at that time.

The purpose of this is simply to ensure that if a tariff is retroactively increased, then an importer who brought in goods in good faith is not unreasonably penalized.

I understand that the Government has established an interdepartmental review board with respect to tariffs that may need to be reviewed under Clause 139. The Government will probably argue that this is sufficient. However, our argument still is that where retroactive action increases a tariff, it would be unreasonable to penalize importers who had acted in good faith. The Government's response is useful but does not obviate the need for our amendment.

Most affected by this clause are small businesses that have not had the time or the money to seek out the new system as did multinationals.

I encourage the Government to give consideration to this amendment. We must ensure that the legislation does not