

*Customs Tariff*

on potatoes. Under the provisions of the agreement they were put on the free list. Now it is desired to restore the protection to the rate of duty that existed prior to the agreement. I have no objection, as a matter of policy, to that; I think it is in the interests of the agricultural producers of this country that there should be some protection. But again I say, why not go at it in the straightforward way of imposing a duty, instead of taking this roundabout means? I wonder if the reason is that this government has been preaching reduction of tariff so long that it desires to conceal any case in which there is an increase in the tariff or an imposition of duty. We heard the minister talking about the consumer. Well, surely here the consumer is interested; a pretty substantial duty is imposed upon a very ordinary and common article of food, but this indirect, roundabout way is adopted, the method of countervailing duty. I can only repeat that I think it is not the straightforward way of doing it. We ought to be able to face a situation of this kind. When in the interests of Canadian producers a duty is desirable it ought to be imposed. Tariffs should be made here, by the Canadian people, in their own interest; they should not be controlled or regulated by the tariff or other action of any foreign country.

Item agreed to.

Customs tariff—99c. Raisins and dried currants, per pound: British preferential tariff, free; intermediate tariff, 4 cents; general tariff, 4 cents.

When in packages weighing two pounds each, or less, the weight of such packages to be included in the weight for duty.

Mr. STIRLING: What is the reason for this alteration?

Mr. DUNNING: It restores the position as regards Australian raisins to what it was before the expiration of the period. There was a lapse of, I think, one month during which the preference to Australia was reduced. This restores it.

Mr. BENNETT: The former government undertook to do this.

Mr. DUNNING: Yes. Parliament did not meet in time to act.

Mr. BENNETT: That is right.

Item agreed to.

Customs tariff—113. Coconut desiccated, sweetened or not, per pound: British preferential tariff, 3 cents; intermediate tariff, 6 cents; general tariff, 6 cents.

Mr. DUNNING: As regards this item, I am asking my colleague the Minister of [Mr. Stewart.]

Justice (Mr. Lapointe) to move an amendment striking out tariff item 113 wherever the said item, enumeration or rates of duty occur in such resolution. I ask this because I am a little concerned lest the reduction proposed on budget day in favour of desiccated coconut imported under the British preferential tariff worked to the disadvantage of the trade in coconuts under the same tariff between the West Indies and Canada. Representations have been made on behalf of certain of the West Indian colonies to the effect that this might be the result, and rather than dislocate the existing trade in whole nuts, I prefer to delete the item from the tariff proposals.

Mr. BENNETT: Item 113 is out altogether?

Mr. DUNNING: Yes, this item is out. The tariff remains as it is. This item will come out altogether, and the tariff will remain as it is in this respect.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I move that resolution No. 5 be amended by striking out tariff item 113 wherever said item, enumeration or rates of duties occur in the said resolution.

Mr. BENNETT: Does that involve any collection of duties, or matters of that kind?

Mr. DUNNING: No, I am advised that there is no difficulty in that connection. If any duties have been collected of course they will be refunded.

Mr. BENNETT: No, it will mean the collection of a larger sum. Under the British preference the rate now is 5 cents, and it was proposed to reduce it to 3 cents.

Mr. DUNNING: It will be just the opposite to what I said.

Mr. BENNETT: I assume that under such circumstances the crown would be powerless to secure the larger amount. While the resolution came into force on the first of May it is quite obvious that the amendment just moved cannot become effective until the bill is assented to, so that any importations at the lower rate will continue until such time as the statute is passed and assented to. As the minister knows, that is one of the penalties we pay for changing tariff items.

Mr. DUNNING: All that my right hon. friend has said is perfectly correct, but in this case I gather that the desiccated article comes from as far distant as Ceylon, fortunately, which rather helps to overcome the difficulty.

Amendment agreed to.