

*Customs Tariff*

promises of a new era and that things would change drastically. Well, they changed drastically. For young people under the age of 30 years there is an unemployment rate of 60 per cent. Approximately one million people are living off food stamps. Its economy is literally in ruin. Some very serious challenges are facing the people of Jamaica.

Just the other day I read in the newspaper that the country of Guyana is experiencing unbelievable problems in terms of its debt. Essentially the IMF has said that it is no longer interested in assisting Guyana in terms of providing any more loans. I suppose it could be put in the basket case category of the famous triage approach; it is almost beyond the point of return.

I use these two fairly extreme examples of Guyana and Jamaica to indicate that things are very serious. Canada could and should be doing a great deal to relieve those problems. We have a historic relationship with the Caribbean. I suppose it goes back to the very beginning of trade in Canada. Saltfish was sailed down to the West Indies, and we brought back molasses, sugar, rum, and all sorts of other products. Of course that trading problem resulted in Canadian banks becoming the major banking institutions of the Caribbean and so on.

When the Prime Minister attended the Caribbean conference last year he indicated that Canada would take steps to free up some of the trading restrictions. Basically that is what Bill C-111 attempts to do in part. There will now be duty-free access to a vast majority of our imports from the Caribbean countries. An overwhelming percentage is now duty-free, as it should be.

Let us look at the exemptions to free trade with the Caribbean countries. They include textiles, clothing, footwear, and leather products. The Caribbean countries want to expand their export markets or their export production in the areas of textiles, clothing, footwear, and leather products. In other words, the areas in which they hope to expand and therefore create more jobs and a stronger manufacturing base in their countries are the areas in which we are essentially retaining tariffs. I really do not know what to say, other than to say that if we were really serious about assisting those countries we would not keep duties on those particular commodity areas.

We also see included a 60 per cent local value added criterion. In other words, if at least 60 per cent of the shirts, footwear, or whatever are not locally produced, so to speak, they do not qualify for access into Canada. Much of the manufacturing in Caribbean countries is on a value added basis, with much of the production being done offshore, as they call it. Materials and parts come into those countries to be assembled, finished, and exported. With the 60 per cent local value added criterion, basically onerous restrictions are placed upon exports from the Caribbean to Canada. Informally a number of Jamaican businessmen have said that this initiative will not change much the relationship between Jamaica and Canada.

Basically we are of the opinion that the duty on all manufacturing should have been removed, particularly those areas with the greatest growth potential. The region itself is in economic crisis. A more generous market access for manufacturers, really at little cost to Canada, would have demonstrated a more substantive commitment to the development of the Caribbean basin. It would be another way to assist those countries in reducing the debt burden with which almost all of them find themselves faced these days.

I should like to summarize the major thrust of Bill C-111. Certainly it gives the impression that Canada is opening up its trading opportunities with a number of Caribbean countries. The reality is that there is not much difference. However, to be fair and to give credit where at least a minute amount of credit is due, it is an improvement; it is better than it was. Considering the glowing comments of the Prime Minister when he was in the Caribbean about what Canada would be doing in terms of liberalizing trade, he gave the impression to many chambers of commerce, leading business people, and trade union leaders in the Caribbean that in fact there would be a free trade arrangement with those countries. Unfortunately, that has not been accomplished in Bill C-111.

● (1540)

I want to talk about a second part of this Bill, the removal of duty on computers and semi-conductor parts in accordance with a trilateral agreement between Canada, the United States and Japan. That seems odd to me because we have just heard we are not going to remove the duty but put the duty back again. Here is a Bill that will remove duty on semi-conductor parts while at the same time the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) says we are going to retaliate against the United States, and by implication Japan and others, by increasing and keeping the tariff. I really do not know what the Government is doing. Perhaps we could have an explanation of that situation once we get the matter into committee.

Removal of the duty was a move that had widespread support among Canadian producers. They felt they were strong enough to compete and expand their markets in a free trade environment with Japan and the United States. Again, as a result of the recent decision, this whole thing has been thrown into some question. It seems to me we are moving on a Bill when this whole section ought to have been deleted.

One item that gives me a great deal of concern is a little item tacked on in Clause 10 of the Bill which deals with the prohibition on the import of obscene material. So that no one misunderstands what I am about to say, the New Democratic Party has always been extremely concerned, wishing the Government would act with more haste to stop the importation of material which depicts violence against women and the sexual exploitation of children. There is no question of that. Just so my following remarks will not be understood, I want to say that we would like to see the Government moving with haste to close off our borders to the importation of much of the