

*Customs Tariff*

and the United States on the goods they trade. Depending on the products, certain tariffs will be eliminated on January 1, 1989, while others will be phased out over periods of three, five or ten years from that date.

I have already indicated that, while the tariff changes included in this bill are few, they are very important for the companies and individuals who will benefit from them. As an example, the tar sands development industry will be able to import duty free a wide variety of parts not manufactured in Canada, which will allow this industry to reduce its costs at a time when it is attempting by every means possible to produce oil at a cost competitive with world market prices.

Mr. Speaker, the policy of the Government is to meet the needs of the business sector and individuals by amending the tariffs in its annual Budgets. This Bill maintains this tradition. I therefore urge the House to adopt it as quickly as possible.

[English]

**Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary said, this is a fairly straightforward technical Bill which need not take up a lot of time in the House but should, I think, be examined rather carefully in committee.

The Bill introduces amendments to the customs tariff and these were included in the Ways and Means motion tabled as part of the Budget on February 10, 1988. Duties are being removed on a range of equipment used by the oil sands industry, certain compressors for motor vehicles, steel rods for farm silos, and so on. The Government tells us that all these changes have been made at the request of certain segments of industry, and of course we will want to confirm that through hearings with other interested parties to ensure that this is indeed as generally acceptable as we are told.

• (1130)

The Bill also provides for some technical amendments to the customs tariff, some of which are to ensure that goods which are now duty free continue to be so. These include facsimile equipment and diesel engines used in certain construction equipment.

Finally, there are some measures in this Bill to correct errors which were made in the new harmonized systems tariff. As the Parliamentary Secretary mentioned in his speech, the previous Bill, Bill C-87, contained a truly enormous list of goods on which there were changes. The Bill in itself was not very large, but the schedules were enormous comprising several columns. In speaking to that Bill on December 11, I said that brokers, and especially small importers, were clearly going to have problems with new names, new designations, and so on.

The original Bill, C-87, will require very careful monitoring. It does contain one clause, Clause 131, which could be used to

give relief. Clause 62 gives the Government very broad authority of a kind which had been used in the past merely to implement GATT decisions. However, that broad authority could potentially be used to give relief to innocent citizens who find themselves caught up in the maze of this Bill.

One would hope that the Department of Customs and Excise would continue to be helpful to users of the system. Much publicity was undertaken in connection with Bill C-87 and information was provided to the larger brokers to guide them through that more complicated Bill. Bill C-118 contains amendments which the Government has frankly admitted are necessary as a result of its errors.

On the face of it, Mr. Speaker, this is a straightforward Bill, but even Bills which are apparently straightforward and technical often present problems for the users. We do not know how extensive the Government's consultation has been. I would hope that in committee we will be able to hear witnesses and get a better understanding of the effects of these measures on Canadians.

**Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words on behalf of the New Democratic Party on Bill C-118. As the Parliamentary Secretary indicated and the spokesperson for the Liberal Party concurred in, this is not a major Bill. It is not a thick Bill like the one we received earlier which dealt with the harmonization of the trade practices between Canada and other countries involved in GATT. When we discussed Bill C-87 there were concerns expressed with regard to some of the measures. While the Government ignored some of the points raised at that time it has now, through Bill C-118, attempted to deal with some of the mistakes it made when it drafted the harmonization Bill, C-87.

This Bill removes tariffs on a range of equipment used by the oil sands industry, certain differentials and compressors for motor vehicles, steel rods for farm silos, recording tapes used to make cassettes for the blind, certain model kits, and burial shrouds.

We will have some questions in committee with regard to the importance of these measures, the revenue implications that they will have, and the type of consultation which has occurred between the Government and industry. There is not much more I can say about this Bill at this stage. Most of our questions will be asked in committee. We hope to receive appropriate responses from the Minister at that time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.