

Customs Tariff

and would be in place as law by this time. As Hon. Members are aware, the proposed legislation was introduced in the House on June 10 by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie). While the legislation is being considered, the Government wishes to ensure that customs officials will continue to have the powers that they possessed prior to and following the Federal Court of Appeal ruling. The Bill contains a technical amendment, the sole purpose of which is to extend the period of effect of Bill C-38, an Act to amend the Customs Tariff, until December 1987.

In conclusion, this Bill takes action to assist those countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean with which Canada has a special relationship by providing them with duty-free access to the Canadian market for their exports. It also responds to the evolving needs of Canadian manufacturers and identifiable groups in Canadian society. Finally, it ensures that customs officials will continue to intercept obscene material and hate propaganda at the border. As such, this Bill deserves the timely consideration and support of all Hon. Members.

[Translation]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, I found to my surprise this afternoon that the Government had decided to change the orders of the day without giving us prior notice or time to go back to our offices and pick up our notes.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I shall try to comment on this Bill, and I must say that at first glance, and let us say up to half-way through the text, we agree with the principle of the Bill, as we have in the past with respect to other Bills concerning the restructuring of our customs tariff system.

Mr. Speaker, we agree that developing countries should be allowed a reduced tariff or even duty-free entry for the products they export to our country, provided this does not pose a threat to our manufacturers and our jobs. The Bill does provide some degree of monitoring in this respect, and the Minister will have the power to intervene if necessary.

However, the Bill fails to indicate exactly how the Minister of Revenue Canada—Customs and Excise will control the various mechanisms involved and ensure that the entry of such goods will not be prejudicial to our jobs or our manufacturers here in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, considering the stories we hear every day about Revenue Canada's handling of certain cases, it is not surprising that the question often arises: How can such things happen?

Mr. Speaker, I just received a letter from a Toronto company that, after many years of struggling with its tax problems, had finally managed to get back on its feet and was straightening out its financial statements and creating jobs in the hi-tech sector. But lo and behold, Revenue Canada sent in a huge assessment! After negotiations, the company was willing to pay \$40,000 immediately, and make arrangements for subsequent payments so that it would be able to absorb these costs and continue operating at the same time. But

Revenue Canada refused the down payment and wrote to all the company's suppliers and customers, asking them not to pay the company but to send all payments due to the company directly to Revenue Canada, and of course you know what that means. On April 23, the bank was forced to declare the company bankrupt. And since May 2, Mr. Speaker, 175 people are out of work.

Therefore, while we agree with this Bill, which deals with the import of goods from developing countries, we suggest that the Government should set up a mechanism to guarantee that there will be no harmful effect on our industries, businesses and jobs.

Mr. Speaker, Sections 9 and 10 of this Bill have no indirect or direct relation with customs or the tariff. They extend for one year the existing provisions on the import and export of pornography and obscene material. The Government has therefore failed since it had, promised last year to take care of the pornography problem beginning in July 1986. It has not been able to do so. A few days ago, the Government introduced a Bill which has been criticized by just about everyone, but in legislation to amend the customs tariff which allows developing countries to export to Canada, it includes two sections which extend the application of existing provisions on the import of pornographic material.

Mr. Speaker, this is typical of how the Conservative Government likes to act: always in secret. As I said earlier, I hope that it will monitor these duty free or very low duty imports so that Canadian industries will not be penalized.

• (1530)

[English]

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I suppose in a sense it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-111 this afternoon. We have some very serious concerns about it. It is almost an omnibus Bill including a variety of different issues. It deals with obscene material imported into Canada, with the decision to launch a special tariff on computer and semiconductor parts, and with the arrangements with a number of Caribbean countries. In a sense it is a smoke-screen Bill. It gives the impression that Canada has decided to play a major role in assisting economic development in the Caribbean. Following the Caribbean-based initiative by the President of the United States, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is giving the impression that things will improve in terms of our trading relationship which will benefit those countries. Unfortunately when one looks closely at the situation, one realizes that that is not the case.

Recent publications have indicated that the situation in many Caribbean countries is reaching crisis proportions. Needless to say, what is going on in Haiti these days is an extremely problematic situation in terms of civil unrest in that particular part of the world. The Caribbean countries are members of the Commonwealth and are experiencing real difficulties. For example, Jamaica was expecting great things. A Conservative Government was elected on that island on