

Customs Tariff

adversely affected employment or competitive ability with the United States, we would review them. We did get a general statement from the Canadian Horticultural Council. Aside from that, we have not received any particular submissions that our action in November has adversely affected any of those products mentioned by the hon. member.

Mr. Whittaker: The minister may recall that I asked him about the two and a half pound bag for spray materials the last time we were in committee of the whole on a customs tariff bill. The two and a half pound bag for agricultural spray materials is the only bag size that is not allowed in duty free. Can the minister advise why this bag size was excluded from this bill, whether it can now be included, or whether this will be done fairly shortly?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, the two and a half pound size reflects an historical problem between agricultural and non-agricultural use. We have had considerable correspondence with the hon. member. The matter is still being reviewed. It may be possible to segregate the general tariff from the most favoured nation situation. We are looking at it on that basis.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, before we proceed to clause 2 I wonder if the minister can give us an indication of the aggregate increase or loss in customs revenue resulting from passage of the bill tonight, if in fact it is passed. Has he an estimate as to the amount of duty we are talking about?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, we are not talking in terms of a significant amount of money. We are moving to relieve some of the complaints from various sectors of the country. The revenue consequences are, in general terms, compared to the total ways and means of the country, fairly minimal. There is no way, for instance, of estimating what the freedom from duty on hymnbooks will mean.

Mr. Stevens: The minister sometimes deals very lightly with billions, certainly with hundreds of millions. When he speaks about minimal revenue, can he give us a ballpark as to really what we have under consideration here?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, when I talk about minimal figures, they are relative figures. I have, for instance, a good deal of respect for the amount of \$1 billion in expenditure cuts, even if the hon. member was not impressed with that figure. In terms of revenue implications, to use the hon. member's own terminology, we are talking about a ballpark figure of about \$1 million. I happen to think \$1 million is a considerable amount of money, but in terms of the \$35 billion in the total revenue picture of the country, it is a relatively minor item.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, with regard to this item where the customs tariff has been taken off hymnbooks with printed music, is that not in direct conflict with what the Secretary of State is trying to do with *Time* and *Reader's Digest* in so far as the printing industry in Canada is concerned?

Mr. Cullen: Religion knows no bounds.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, we in this House are not putting a price tag on religion. This item merely restores a duty free entry for hymnbooks containing printed music. It is a restoration of a situation where the hymnbooks were duty free until September, 1974, when Revenue Canada reclassified them under a different tariff item. We are really restoring a former situation by legislation which Revenue Canada classified by way of administration.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, the minister has made a change in the casual gift, the last item here. Did he give any thought to the question of the wedding gift which is never a casual gift? In many cultures it is a mandatory thing that, in a sense, has to be done. I think it adds to the problems faced by young couples who find that a gift may even arrive unwanted and yet becomes dutiable. The gift can hardly be refused and, therefore, the duty must be paid. Did the minister consider looking into that matter?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, because of the representations of the hon. member and others, we did raise the duty free limit on gifts from \$10 to \$15. Even more significant, the \$15 only applies to the first \$15 of the gift.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): That is a big jump.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): As the hon. member for Edmonton West says, that is a big jump. It may help young couples in the hon. member's constituency.

The Chairman: The hon. member for Pembina.

Mr. Brisco: Thank you for the new riding, Mr. Chairman. However, it is Kootenay West. We will take any riding you can give us. Would the minister elaborate a bit on the response he gave to the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary with regard to hymnbooks, prayer books and so on? I do not say this with tongue in cheek. Does this create an unfair imposition against Canadian publishers who may be trying to promote their own industry? Apparently that is the thrust of the bill put forward by the Secretary of State with regard to *Time* and *Reader's Digest*. Quite honestly, I do not feel the minister responded in that context to the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, we are really restoring a situation that existed until September, 1974, when there was an administrative reclassification. I do not think the local printing industry is at stake. When we had very strong moral representations from all sides of the House, spearheaded by the hon. member for Hamilton West, it was pretty hard to refuse.

● (2100)

Mr. Whittaker: I have a question about item 40916-1. Just what does "mowing machines" mean in this context? Does it mean lawn mowers?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): It does not apply to lawn mowers.

An hon. Member: What kind of mowers, then?