

Customs Tariff

I started to read up on this subject and the plight of Canadian agriculture, particularly the fruit and vegetable industry. I found that the former minister of finance, twice removed, was expressing concern on this point. He pointed out the diminishing level of protection against imports, particularly as it affected fruits and vegetables. He also stated that the existing level of tariff structure could not provide sufficient protection for our agriculture industry.

This problem started in 1971. It did not affect just agriculture. Something fell into place. Something started to happen whereby the end products of Canadian manufacturers started to go into a strong deficit position. When a trend starts in 1971 and the government hopes and dreams it will be cyclical right up until today, when there is no chance of that problem being cyclical in fact, then there is something seriously wrong.

Can the government give us any answers as to what started going wrong? Was it the non-tariff trade barriers put in place by the United States? Was it DISC? Was it the Benson tax act that started to remove the decision-making base for Canadian industry and Canadian businessmen? What started to happen in 1971 that has delivered us into the very serious trade deficit position we now have?

As the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth stated, there is about \$970 million worth of white goods in a deficit position because they are no longer being manufactured in Canada. You would think that in the heartland of the industrial sector of Canada technology could be put into place. Surely there are some investment incentives to keep that type of industry and work force going in Canada. However, that is not the way it is. Something is tragically and basically wrong in this country.

For the past year I have been deeply involved in this House trying to point out, not only before an anti-dumping tribunal but to the House, that it is not just a bilingual problem in Canada that is causing our unity problems, it is a regional problem. Where I live on the west coast, there is proximity to the Pacific rim trading countries such as Japan. We trade north and south with the west coast of the United States. We deal with all of the Asian countries. It is a market unto itself.

You cannot look at Canada from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean as a single market. You cannot put in place anti-dumping tribunal rulings to protect a single producer here in the industrial heartland of Canada. At no time we on the west coast fought against or argued against proper anti-dumping procedures. However, some markets are injured and others are not. When we have a blanket policy putting in an anti-dumping barrier, such as on wide flange steel beams, we do irreparable harm to the steel fabricating industry on the west coast. We threaten 1,500 to 2,000 jobs there. The normal, traditional, historic market for the steel fabricating industry in British Columbia is lost. Where does it go? It goes into the heartland in the central industrial sector of Canada. We say that just is not fair. That type of law or legislation is obsolete. Somehow or other we have to get the ear of the government about this. Otherwise it will flair up into a situation that will compound the problems that Canadian confederation faces today.

[Mr. Huntington.]

We do not go against GATT if we recognize there is more than one market in Canada. In fact, if GATT is there for the purpose of liberalizing trade and if we are to acknowledge there are markets in Canada where injury exists and at the same time a market in Canada where injury does not exist, we are then within the spirit of GATT and need no amendment to it. Surely we are within the liberalization principles of GATT.

I urge those on the government side who are responsible for this regional inequity to hear the call from the west. Canada cannot continue to exist strictly for centralist industries and interests. Those industries have to be spread. There has to be an open spirit of negotiation. We in the west are pleading for that. I have just suggested one of the ways to resolve the problem for us there.

Something else that troubles me is the lack of in-depth marketing studies that precedes very serious decisions on the part of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. They react to lobbying from certain specific interests. They put quotas in place. However, when you telephone to ask what they have done in the way of an over-all market study, studying spinoffs and negative effects as well as the positive effects of putting in quotas, you are quite shocked at their reply. They say they do not know because they have not asked those questions. They have not talked to that segment of the industry.

When all hell breaks loose and the world caves in around these people, when their offices are filled with protests and they do not have the trained manpower to handle the situation, they wonder what hit them. That kind of confusion and turmoil could be prevented if before some of these decisions were made by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce they did a proper in-depth marketing study.

They should not place total emphasis on self-interest groups that are after a specific degree of protection. They should provide protection, but only providing it is given in terms of total man-years and total Canadian payroll. There should be more benefit to Canadian industry, rather than the disturbance caused to the importers and the retailers who also make up an important payroll in Canada.

● (2052)

I call for an overview. I call for more in-depth marketing. I call for more research behind the decision-making process of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The department just does not anticipate side effects. After the department got into textile quotas—I knew it had been warned by wave after wave of interested, knowledgeable people in the industry—I asked if it had given consideration to any of the things that were going to happen, and the department said no. I have asked well meaning individuals who are every bit as concerned about this country as I am if they had any idea of what they were getting into, and they said no, which just bears out the point I am making. There must be a complete lack of research behind some of these moves.

We are trying to protect the textile industry, yet the United States realizes that that is impossible for them. Their technolo-