

Customs Tariff

Mr. Benjamin: The Government should tell the western grain producers about losing the benefits of the Western Grain Transportation Act on exports of rape-seed meal and grain screenings to the western U.S. Under the deal those grain companies will have to pay the commercial rate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair is not convinced this matter is relevant to the clause in question.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I was just pointing out how illogical the Government is when it tries to say that this is good for agriculture. Tell that to the agriculture producers of Quebec. Ask the Minister who was booed and heckled by those farmers the other day. They and the Government of Quebec have come forward with 10 demands which must be in the trade deal if the Government wants to keep the support of that province. Yet the Government says it is good for agriculture. Even though there is a clause in this Bill which the Government says it will never use, it will not delete it. The Government has a commitment that the U.S. will pass a Bill like this at the same time as we do, yet they are not doing so. I do not find any logic in any of those matters.

The commitments and assurances Canada has received, particularly those from the U.S., are not worth the paper they are written on by the Department of National Revenue. I would be surprised if the U.S. Congress follows through. Even if it did, it may not be for another year. In the meantime, Canada is committed to implementing the harmonization system next January 1. That leaves us out there by ourselves.

When you are dealing with the Yankee trader, as the saying used to go many years ago, you keep your back to the wall and your gun loose in your holster. The Government has failed to do that. I do not mean that literally, of course. You had to do it literally a hundred or more years ago, but at this point it is just figuratively speaking.

The Government is being had again for the umpteenth time, and we have a classic example contained in a statement from the Department of National Revenue itself. That is why there should be nothing in this Bill which specifies when it comes into force. It should only come into force if, as, and when our trading partners, particularly the U.S. and Japan, have passed the same kind of legislation. Then we can go ahead and bring ours into force.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the new tariff was proposed following a close public consultation which began several years ago. We were involved in an harmonization process. We shall deliver the goods.

The Canadian business community, including importers and exporters, is looking forward to this Bill and has taken many steps to ensure its implementation. This legislation will be extremely beneficial to businesses, because it will increase

their effectiveness and reduce their costs. Both the Government and the private sector have devoted considerable time and effort putting this Bill together.

Mr. Speaker, I have here letters suggesting that it would be a disaster not to make these tariff changes, because everybody is now ready. Delaying their implementation would cost millions of dollars and we have the backing of such major organizations as the *Council of Forest Industries of British Columbia*, the *Canadian Chamber of Commerce*, the *Canadian Association of Customs Brokers*, the *Canadian Importers Association*, the *Canadian Manufacturers' Association*, the *Motor Vehicles Manufacturers Association (BIG 4)* and so on and so forth. This list also includes the *Canadian Textiles Institute*.

Moreover, effective January 1, our main trading partners will adopt the same Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System and expect Canada to play its part in the area of international development, and that is what we are dealing with this afternoon.

I therefore urge my colleagues in the House to vote against this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, the point in introducing this motion is that the Opposition does not have the right to propose a motion which says that an Act shall be proclaimed at the appropriate time. That impinges on the royal prerogative. The only option left to us is to make some complaints about this Bill having a clause which indicates that it will come into effect on January 1, 1988. That may not be an appropriate time given that our major trading partner has not yet shown any indication it will produce similar legislation of its own. The latest information we have is that Congressman Sam Gibbons may be introducing something next week. The harmonization system is still apparently a part of the large omnibus Bill, but it is moving very slowly through Congress. The Government and other sources tell us they are banking on Congressman Sam Gibbons initiating companion legislation on the other side of the border.

If that does not happen, this legislation puts our importers and brokers at somewhat of a disadvantage. We will have complied with the harmonization scheme, and our exporters will have to work under a different set of rules than the Americans. This will continue until both sides are willing and able to implement the agreement which they have been working on since 1981. We think it only makes sense for Canada to not implement its side of the bargain until the other side is ready as well.

Since this is the last clause of the Bill, we are making this point as part of the over-all argument we made in presenting improvements to this Bill. I remind the House that we have attempted, throughout the course of this debate, to give Parliament more rights and a faster overview of any trade