

Customs Tariff (No. 2)

processing industry. Similarly, the asparagus canners and freezers are having real difficulties in competing against imports from Taiwan. This is a labour intensive industry, and if processors cannot compete, once again thousands of jobs will be affected.

The glacé and maraschino cherry industry has already fought and won a case against dumping of products imported from France. The lowering of tariff puts the industry back in the same position. The industry has to decide whether it will continue to process here or have its product packed in another country. This will also affect the cherry brining industry which has difficulty in competing against cherries brined in Italy.

We are not only talking about the loss of a processing industry and jobs; we are also talking about the future of growers who are dependent on processors as an outlet for their produce. We sincerely hope that the tariff protection which the processing industry had will be restored, as the loss of this industry will eliminate competition for foreign imports, and inevitably result in higher prices to the consumer and the loss of jobs to Canadians.

The specific processed product tariff items which we request be restored to the pre-budget rates are the following: item 8901-1, asparagus; item 9001-1, frozen asparagus; item 9002-1, Brussels sprouts; 9004-1, frozen vegetables. This category includes, among others, green peas, corn, green beans and cauliflower, and the budget change is very serious in these highly competitive items. Then there is item 9010-1, dried vegetables.

This new industry is expanding, both in the freeze-dry and other forms of dehydration. We are concerned over the economics of this industry. Next is item 9015-1, pickled or preserved vegetables. The reduction will create problems in the frozen french-fried potato industry.

Another item is 9021-1, tomato juice. Unless reinstated the reduction will result in further inroads of Californian products into western Canada, thus affecting sales of the Ontario product. Item 9030-1 refers to pre-cooked potatoes. This industry is complementary to our fresh potato production and is facing serious import competition. Item 9032-1 relates to pre-cooked potatoes with admixture. Item 9100-1 refers to soups. Then we have 10520-1, cherries in brine, item 10530-1, jellies and jams, and item 10535-1, fruits and peels. We were already subject to dumping of these products from France. The danger of large scale imports still exists and we cannot afford further loss of protection. The next item is 10601-1, apricots. Next are items 10603-1, peaches, 10604, pears and 10607-1, mixtures.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the hon. gentleman that I have read that brief. As a matter of fact, representatives of the council attended a number of times upon me and the Minister of Agriculture. I assured them, as I now assure the committee, that if a case is made in the circumstances as described, action will be taken and a tariff will be restored.

I want to assure the hon. member who says that industry may be tired of studies, that the Tariff Board will commence hearings on this in January. Those hearings have already been announced. As a result of the extensive discussions we have had with the Canadian Horticultural Council, we have already made a commitment, as I men-

[Mr. Whittaker.]

tioned on second reading, in respect of canned peaches. Some of the representations on certain commodities have already been withdrawn by the Canadian Horticultural Council after discussions with the Minister of Agriculture and myself as well as our officials. We have a continuing interchange with the council and I want to assure the hon. member we are taking this matter seriously.

• (2110)

Mr. McKinley: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister of Finance could explain something to us. He said that if it could be proven that producers are being hurt by the lowering of these tariffs. Could he explain to us the procedures that producers would have to adopt in order to prove to the government that they are being hurt? If it is a long, drawn out six months affair, they might all be out of business before the government decides to do something about it.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): What happens is that when I or the Minister of Agriculture receives a complaint, we send out a list of questions—not a questionnaire—geared to their own particular situation to try to elicit facts. On the basis of that, if we can ascertain damage either to production, employment, or the ability to compete, we take relieving action. If we are not quite clear and representations are made in particular through a member of parliament, who comes in with the people concerned, I and the Minister of Agriculture set up a personal meeting, either with us or with senior officials, to examine the situation.

Particularly with regard to agricultural products, in view of the short seasons involved for some of these products, as we did with tomatoes or cherries we take action to solve the seasonal problem facing those producers. That is the procedure. I want to assure the committee that if any producer or producer association is affected and a member of parliament wishes to bring it to our attention, the matter gets prompt and immediate attention from the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. McKinley: I have another matter that I wanted to raise. It has to do with the reducing of the tariff on mobile homes. Can the minister tell me whether they are included in this clause or the next one. The item is in schedule B.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): We have had many representations from manufacturers of mobile homes, not only this evening and during this debate but from members on various sides of the House. Officials in my department have written the association suggesting a meeting, but we did not receive a reply yet. They have not come back to us as yet to set up a meeting, but we want to have a meeting with them and analyze their brief and their situation. If they will just confirm a date with us, our people will meet with them at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. McKinley: My main concern is not only with regard to mobile homes, Mr. Chairman. I do not know whether hon. members will remember the time back in 1969 when the government was busy closing Canadian forces bases across Canada. They happened to close one near Clinton in Huron county. Previous to that, questions had been asked about this in the House. I have here an answer that