

Customs and Excise

received the contract for construction of the six frigates, and a substantial amount of that work is being subcontracted to yards in other parts of the country. However, this contract will contribute handsomely to the welfare of that yard and employees in that region.

● (1750)

I have become very concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the Government's intentions concerning the shipbuilding industry in Canada. As can be pointed out by anyone who has had the time to peruse *Hansard*, the Government's record has not been enviable at all. Members on this side have repeatedly asked questions of the various Ministers responsible for shipbuilding policy over the years, of whom there have been several, and all of whom promised to introduce the legislation. With the exception of the present Minister, none of them have produced. In response to these questions we have never received any satisfaction whatsoever. I am informed that questions have been asked as to the status of the frigate program at the Saint John yard. They have asked which shipyard will the first frigate be started in? What is the schedule for construction of the second and third ships? Will all the work normally connected with the construction of a ship be undertaken in the yard itself, or is the contract written in such a way that the work can be subcontracted out? These extremely important questions have been left unanswered. They are being asked by the workers directly affected, particularly those in the Saint John yard.

I ask the Government to be considerate and to be concerned about the plight of those workers, Mr. Speaker. It is a very frightening experience to not have the assurance of work that you thought you had a few short months ago. I think these people deserve answers to these questions which so directly affect them, and I urge the Government to address itself to these questions. If the Bill is allowed to pass with the additions and recommendations we have made, it will be a long over-due step forward, and I look forward to some positive response from the Government in that regard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Mr. MacLaren, seconded by Mr. Pinard, moved that Bill C-16, an Act to apply the customs and excise jurisdiction of Canada to the continental shelf of Canada and to amend certain Acts in relation thereto or in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to Committee of the Whole.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Guilbault in the Chair.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order. House in Committee of the Whole on Bill C-16, an Act to apply the customs and excise jurisdiction over Canada to the continental shelf of Canada, and to amend certain acts in relation thereto or in consequence thereof.

Clauses 2 to 13 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 14—

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Chairman, Clause 14 refers to the schedule in the Bill. Therefore, I move:

That the Customs and Excise Offshore Application Act be amended in the Schedule on page 12 as follows:

That the tariff item 44002-1 be deleted.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The Chair is ready to entertain the amendment.

Mr. MacLaren: A point of order, Mr. Chairman. If I understand the amendment correctly, it would have the effect of placing a charge on the public purse. Therefore, I would assume that under Beauséjour, Articles 523, 516 and 519, the amendment is not in order.

● (1800)

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The amendment, which I have in my hand, reads that the tariff item be deleted. In deleting the tariff item, we do not impose a tax. As a matter of fact, we would even remove a tax. I do not know if the Minister understood the amendment properly. This would remove the tariff item completely. In other words, the 25 per cent general tariff would also be dropped. We would lower the taxes, not increase them. The amendment is in order as far as the Chair is concerned.

Mr. MacLaren: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The Minister on a point of order.

Mr. MacLaren: As I understand the amendment as it was read, we would be removing, under the British preferential tariff, the free access; under most favoured nation, free access; and under general preferential tariff, free access. If we remove "free" from each of those three categories then it necessarily follows that the general tariff of 25 per cent pertains. Therefore, there is a charge in the sense that we would be imposing on importers of those vessels the general tariff as opposed to the free entry under the other three categories.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The Chair is taking the question under advisement for a minute.

The Chair has no problem accepting the substance of the amendment, that is, the deletion of a tariff item. The Chair realizes that the Member is doing it by amending Clause 14. There is a procedural problem involved there. I would like to suggest to the Hon. Member that he could move the same