

Customs Tariff

Rosetown-Biggar mentioned the consumer and also the protection of the grower. The key to the protection of the grower is the time when these duties are applied. There is one question I should like to ask the parliamentary assistant, and I hope he will answer it when I finish. It is this: Are these duties at the disposal of the grower when requested? That is a matter of importance to the industry.

I should like to point out to the members of the committee that when an application is made for these duties to be applied, there is one loophole which hon. members perhaps do not know about. It is that all cars that are rolling are allowed in free of that duty. Let us say that the duty was put on on April 1. Any cars that have been bought by the produce dealers in this country—perhaps from California, Arizona or Texas—are allowed in without payment of that duty. To get them here sometimes takes a period of ten days. Then to dispose of this produce, or certain products, perhaps takes ten days; as to other products, it perhaps takes a shorter period of time. All these things must be considered having regard to the proper time of application. If the Department of National Revenue, which has the administration of these duties, will accept the recommendation of the growers—and I hope the parliamentary assistant will agree to this—who most of the time know what cars are rolling and how long it will take to dispose of those products before the Canadian product comes on the market, I think the difficulty will be taken care of.

The hon. member for York West said that the growers are in serious difficulty. I will admit that under the embargoes by the Minister of Finance during the shortage of United States dollars, they certainly were in fine shape; but during the last ten years the fruit and vegetable grower of this country has made wonderful progress; and financially, I think he is in as good shape as any other particular group of farmers in this country.

I might also mention the fact that in that last Geneva agreement—which was made some time ago, of course, and is just being implemented now—we received many cuts in the United States tariff. Some of their duties are now much lower than the duties on United States produce coming to Canada. Many of these duties have been cut. I might mention some of them. For instance, asparagus was cut from 50 per cent to 25 per cent; brussels sprouts, from 50 per cent to 25 per cent; cabbage, from one and a half cents to three-quarters of a cent; carrots, from 25 per cent to 12½ per cent; cauliflower from 25 per cent to 12½ per cent. All along

the line we have received substantial cuts which have been helpful to the fruit and vegetable industry. The reason why the fruit and vegetable grower fought to maintain an extremely high tariff in this country was the fact that the United States tariff was so high that he was unable to get into those markets.

I live within 25 miles of the city of Detroit. Detroit, with its surrounding suburbs, has a population of perhaps two million people. There are perhaps more people in that particular city than there are in all the cities of the province of Ontario put together. That market has been denied to us. But through this last Geneva agreement and the one previously negotiated we have received concessions which have been helpful to the grower not only in the district which I represent but in many other districts in Canada.

The fruit and vegetable industry is a tremendous one, returning a large amount of revenue to the Canadian farmers, perhaps to the extent of \$150 million or \$160 million. I know that there are concentrated areas like southwestern Ontario, the Niagara peninsula and the Okanagan valley; but fruit and vegetables are grown clean across Canada. It is therefore difficult to prepare an estimate of the revenue to the farmers from that particular industry.

I believe the Canadian officials here have asked for further cuts on many other products. One of those mentioned has been potatoes. That matter is on the list, I believe, for discussion at Torquay. In the agreement which we hope will be made there, I trust that we shall receive more concessions which will result in more benefits to the Canadian grower. With the proper application of the duties we have, I think the growers will receive reasonable protection; but that protection hinges on the automatic application of the duties when applied for by the grower. I hope that the parliamentary assistant will rise in his place and say that if the growers are reasonable in their application, to protect the consumers, it should go on automatically for the protection of the grower. I might say that I was with a group of other farmers this afternoon and I did not hear all of the discussion.

Another point that was mentioned by the hon. member for Greenwood was regional applications. To protect the consumer in different areas like the western provinces, the maritimes, Ontario and Quebec, that regional application was put into effect quite some years ago. I know that when I first came into the house in 1935 there were no