

Customs Tariff

season you should not only be looking at exports but at imports as well, so that the dock is filled to capacity every single day.

The minister should look very seriously at the customs duties and tariffs on imports, and explore the possibility of developing the port of Churchill into a free port. Let us use it to its full capacity.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): How about a casino up there?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Carried.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Laniel in the chair.

On Clause 1—*Schedule A amended.*

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, before we proceed with clause 1 and other clauses of this bill I wonder if the minister could answer some general questions. At second reading stage I referred to the fact that the customs duties shown in the minister's budget had risen from \$1,810 million to \$1,930 million. I felt that the House would be interested in the minister's explanation of why he anticipates, in his current forecast, the customs duties to be up \$120 million. I understand that it is probably the increase in goods imported into the country, but I think it would be helpful if we had something more specific concerning this rather substantial increase in customs revenue.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, the hon. gentleman is referring to figures that can be found in one of the annexes to the budget package put out for the elucidation of the House and the people of Canada called "Government of Canada Statement of Financial Transactions 1974-75". On page 7 of that document one finds that excise duties this year, on a preliminary actual prediction, amount to \$749 million, and the predicted customs import duties amount to \$1,810 million.

The primary reason for the increase in those figures over the 1974 figures of \$686 million and \$1,384 million respectively can be traced to the inflationary effects on movement of goods imported from other countries.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for that information. Could he give members a breakdown of what commodities yield the greater revenue? If he could give us the three or four largest commodities as far as customs revenue is concerned, that would be useful.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, I would be willing to table a complete breakdown. I do not have it at hand, but if the hon. member wants it I will table it in the House.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, in reference to some of the tariff items dealt with in the November 18 budget, most members have undoubtedly received a petition from people connected with the tire industry. They have

[Mr. Smith (Churchill).]

indicated their anxiety with respect to the lowering of the tariff on certain tire items from 17½ per cent to 12½ per cent. My colleague, the hon. member for Simcoe North, referred to this.

Could the minister give an indication if consideration has been given to restoring this tariff or if he has any particular comment to make with respect to those who have signed petitions stating that the reduction in tariff has resulted in the loss of about 1,000 jobs?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, one of the bonuses of holding this portfolio is that I have been given a very efficient parliamentary secretary who has been dealing with this issue. I wonder if you would allow him to deal with the question?

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Chairman, first of all I should like to compliment the United Rubber Workers for the excellent representations they have made for reinstating that particular tariff item at 17½ per cent. I met with the 10 or 12 officials of that union from across Canada. In a very fair and objective way they indicated their concern about this particular tariff item and gave us an appreciation of the problem as they saw it. They were honest in stating that the total problem was not due to the tariff alone and that there were other problems faced by the industry. As a result of their representation, however, we had a better understanding of the predicaments they face at the present time.

The companies which supply material to the tire companies also made representations to officials of the department. We then went back to the tire companies and discussed the matter with them.

I think it would be premature to indicate the action that will be taken, but we have had a very full and comprehensive briefing from the tire companies, those who supply them and those who work for them. I would say the decision should be forthcoming in the not too distant future.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his answer with respect to the tariff on tires and related products.

At the time of passage of the last customs bill coming out of the November 18 budget certain anxieties were expressed with respect to the changes. This was with respect to certain fresh produce such as cabbage, onions, carrots and peas. Some of those items were dealt with at that time. Can the minister indicate if in fact there has been any particular complaint as a result of the changes he made coming out of that November 18 budget with regard to fresh produce items covered at that time?

● (2050)

The Chairman: Shall clause I carry?

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I believe the minister is getting ready to answer.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, the hon. member and the House will recall that when we made these tariff adjustments we also brought them before the committee of the House in a way that if the adjustments