

Customs Tariff

is to be found in an appendix to the *Hansard* of June 14, 1955 entitled "The results of tariff negotiations at Geneva". I am not going to repeat this information for the benefit of the committee, but I am certainly going to say that under separate headings and in very valuable detail we find here in item (c), after a reference to the concessions given to the new entering partner, Japan, a reference to concessions by the United States to Canada. Then under (d) a reference is made to concessions by Canada to the United States.

This practice was followed in 1956 by the then minister of trade and commerce, and I refer to the June 7, 1956 copy of *Hansard*, page 4972. The then minister of trade and commerce, Mr. Howe, did just what was done in 1955 and this information is available to all members who care to read it. I want to quote just a few words of the minister spoken at the time he was tabling this document for the information of the public and the House of Commons. He said:

The agreement concluded between Canada and the United States is one of the major agreements resulting from this conference. The concessions that could be made by the United States were limited by United States legislation to maximum tariff reductions of 15 per cent spread over the next two years.

In an aside I questioned whether it was two years or three. I understood that the executive had never been given more than a 5 per cent discretion, and I think 5 per cent is a discretion which has been under consideration within the last few days in the United States congress with regard to tariff reduction and it has now, probably, been passed.

But to continue with my reference to what the minister of trade and commerce at that time said in the House of Commons. He went on:

Also there were a number of items, particularly in the agricultural and fisheries fields, on which the United States was not prepared to negotiate at this time. Within these limitations, however, we have concluded an agreement which should be most satisfactory to both countries. The fact that the United States concessions would be implemented in three stages was, of course, taken into consideration fully by our negotiators in determining the nature of the concessions Canada could justifiably grant. Canada has obtained maximum concessions on a large number of products including various chemicals, certain metals, some agricultural items and a number of manufactured products and machinery.

Mr. Broome: Is that the detailed report you were talking about?

Mr. Benidickson: No, I will refer the hon. member to that. It takes up many pages and shows the full information which was available to parliament and the public. If he will refer to page 4834 of *Hansard*, going on

[Mr. Benidickson.]

from there he will find, I think, eight pages setting out the detail, to page 4841. And now, if the hon. member will allow me, I will continue, simply to show the type of information which was given to the members of the House of Commons under the previous administration by the minister of trade and commerce. Further, he said:

I am sure the house will welcome this agreement as a further step in our joint effort to reduce trade barriers between Canada and the United States.

Then, further, on page 4793, the former minister said:

In multilateral negotiations which involve reductions in most-favoured-nation tariffs, it is customary for both Canada and the United Kingdom to alter certain of the tariff preferences accorded to the other. Most of the reductions in margins of preference of interest to Canadian exporters in the United Kingdom are relatively minor. There were, of course, opportunities for informal exchanges of views on matters of common interest between Canada and the United Kingdom as the negotiations progressed.

The hon. member who just rose gave me the opportunity to point out that the details were again found as an appendix to *Hansard* of that date. We again find, in 1956, the details outlined according to product and according to the rate of tariffs showing the concessions obtained by Canada and the concessions granted by Canada as a result of the negotiations which occurred that year by reason of Canada's participation in the general agreement on tariffs and trade.

I am concerned about why we have no information with respect to the year 1957. I realize, of course, that these reports were produced in parliament by the previous administration in June of 1955 and in June of 1956. We all know what the circumstances were in June 1957. I anticipate some applause which has not developed. However, we did have a session after June, 1957, and to my knowledge we have not had any information given us similar to the outline which I have given respecting 1956 and 1957. Indeed when in our discussion yesterday I raised this question in all my innocence—because, I frankly admit, I did not recall this experience—I asked the Minister of Finance, as recorded on page 3435 of *Hansard*, whether he would indicate what he did trade, finally, in respect to the items that we had under discussion and with respect to such items as are before the committee at this moment. The minister replied:

It is not customary to indicate the various stages in the bargaining. We might have to bargain again with the United States at some time, and I think the hon. gentleman will realize that the practice in this respect is a sound one—not to attempt to retract the various stages in the bargaining.