

Customs Tariff

That any enactment founded upon paragraphs 1 to 21 inclusive and Schedules I, II and III to this motion will be deemed to have come into force on the 13th day of November, 1981, and to have applied to all goods mentioned in the said paragraphs and Schedules imported or taken out of warehouse for consumption on or after that day—

This deals with a trade agreement with New Zealand but, with the greatest respect, there is no appearance of that trade agreement. The terms of it are not before the House. We know—but not through the government—that the agreement was signed in September, 1981, but we know not the terms of it. At this moment the House is not in a position to debate fully this bill. There is no way of determining what is contained in that New Zealand trade agreement. The House is entitled to have that agreement before it. After all, do we know what notice of default has to be given, when default occurs, or whether there are dates for changes? Can notice be given by one contracting country to another for certain amendments either for elimination of some goods or the inclusion of other goods at certain levels? At the moment we are faced with surreptitiously bootlegging into the Customs Tariff the New Zealand Trade Agreement Act.

● (1620)

It is not that this House can by vote amend any of the tariffs of such an agreement between two contracting parties. This we know. It is one of the anomalies of the duties of the House that we are presented in many instances with tax agreements between countries. The finance committee has to consider the tax agreement but it is not allowed to change one dot or uncross one "t". That is the exclusive preserve of the department of the government negotiating with a third party.

Therefore, the House is reduced to swallowing the pill without asking any questions. Whether it is in the Committee of the Whole or whether it is in the standing committee, the parliamentary secretary knows whereof I speak, that on tax treaties there is not one thing that Members of Parliament can change. Members of Parliament can comment, but they cannot change. In this particular instance, we cannot even ask questions because the agreement is not here. There is no agreement appended to Bill C-90 either.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Lambert: Where is the agreement? Is it in somebody's heart? Or in somebody's head? Does it sit up in the trade department on some shelf? Where is it? That is the question. Is the minister prepared to table that agreement so that this debate will have some semblance of sense? I have a number of colleagues who wish to comment if they can see the agreement.

The Minister of State for Finance in shaking his head cannot under any circumstances say that The New Zealand Trade Agreement Act, having been repealed and the amendment act being repealed, has not been replaced by some agreement. There is sufficient knowledge about because I have a note that the bill gives effect to the new Canada-New Zealand agreement on trade and economic co-operation signed September, 1981, which repeals the old agreements and imple-

ments the terms of the new agreement in a Ways and Means motion.

I raise the point again. How can there be intelligent debate? Perhaps the Chair will consider that there need not be intelligent debate in this House.

Mr. Laniel: The rules say nothing about that.

Mr. Lambert: Government members are not interested in intelligent debate.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert: It does not alter the fact that government backbenchers are not interested in intelligent debate.

If the information is not provided to this House with regard to a bill, then I say this method, ingenious as it may be, is subverting the purposes of this House in considering these amendments. There is nothing before us, just a list. The minister cannot even interpret the list of the items dealing with New Zealand unless there is an agreement, to which he may have access but to which I do not have access. Therefore, it is my view that the debate on this particular bill should be suspended until the government is prepared to table a copy of the New Zealand-Canada trade agreement of September, 1981, or whatever its date may have been. The one which served to repeal the two legislative enactments is referred to in Sections 20 and 21 of the Ways and Means motion and also referred to in the bill again as Clauses 20 and 21 found on page 10.

Strangely enough, there is a very interesting aspect to this particular bill which I shall call into question. Several of my colleagues have done so, and I will do it for them. In Clause 22 we read:

This act shall be deemed to have come into force on the 13th day of November, 1981 and to have applied to all goods mentioned therein imported or taken out of warehouse for consumption on or after that day, and to have applied to goods previously imported for which no entry for consumption was made before that day.

Does that apply only to the goods coming from New Zealand, or does it apply to all the other changes made with regard to Third World countries where there are generous easings of tariff rates in so far as Canada is concerned?

Those are the questions that I raise as a point of order. My point of order is, once again, that we should not proceed until the government produces the New Zealand-Canada trade agreement.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out to the hon. member that his point of order is not well taken because, having had a closer look at the provisions of the bill, he will notice that its first clauses define or describe whatever changes are to be brought to the Customs Tariff as a result of the trade agreement signed between New Zealand and the Government of Canada. I should also like to point out to him that trade agreements