

Customs Tariff

requested similar changes on a number of occasions, as have the industries themselves. The Government has been able to make such changes through regulation, notwithstanding the fact that Parliament must have authority to make decisions.

If too much of Parliament's time is taken up making minor decisions, it will not have time to deal with more substantive issues. I am concerned by the tone of some of the amendments which would in fact deny Parliament its right to deal with important issues for the reasons I have outlined previously.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, according to the example I gave a few minutes ago, if the preferential tariff had been removed, for instance in the case of Texturon, a company located in Hawkesbury, the price of imports would increase from 13 cents to 15 cents per kilogram, thus giving the industry in Hawkesbury and other companies like Ambertex in Brantford, Ontario, Celanese in Millhaven, Bermatex in Beaconsfield and probably many others, a chance to regain their previous prosperity.

I give this example to demonstrate that we should not, by adopting or proposing amendments to this legislation, make it impossible for the Minister to make future changes, which some of us may find desirable at some time or other when we are approached by our constituents. As I said earlier, it is important not to propose amendments that, on the face of it, would give more power to Parliament but might ultimately paralyze Government operations and prevent us, as parliamentarians, from making representations or even prevent industries from approaching the Government with requests for changes that may be necessary. I am thinking of a situation, for instance, where the Minister might wish to change a tariff and would have to wait until his Bill is adopted by Parliament. There might be a delay of several months, and meanwhile, jobs might be lost in several ridings.

I wanted to express my concerns about a number of amendments to this Bill, and I also would like to point out that although there is some good in the last amendment, Motion No. 16, it might have been better to word it a little differently, for instance, by suggesting that the Government have the Bill ratified as soon as the United States has harmonized its own tariff, otherwise there would be no justification for the Bill's existence and it would of course be useless.

[*English*]

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, Revenue Canada and the Government of Canada have received promises or commitments from other nations, particularly the United States and Japan, that they will pass similar legislation at the same time as we pass this legislation. I am not sure what Japan is doing on this matter, if anything. Certainly the American trade representatives, while they knew of the commitment that the new system would only be adopted if our trading partners, including the United States and Japan, adopted the harmonized system at the same time, have bogged it down in an addendum to a major trade Bill which is before the U.S. Congress.

The U.S. Congress will be recessing very soon for its Christmas and New Year's break. I believe that break lasts until the end of January. The omnibus trade Bill is moving very slowly through the U.S. Congress. In fact, according to Congressman Sam Gibbons, he will be introducing separate legislation governing the harmonized system next week, but there is little likelihood that it will be dealt with before the January 1 implementation date.

How can it be that our Bill comes into force at a time when our largest trading partner has not lived up to its commitment? I do not understand the logic of the Government in its desire to proceed at this time.

The Government has no assurance or guarantee of which I am aware that the U.S. Congress will act on this matter before January 1 or that it will act on it at all. When one watches the goings on in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate and sees the protectionist atmosphere that pervades every sector of the United States economy as well as the Congress, one can only have nothing but extreme doubt that the U.S. Senate will pass legislation like this very quickly if at all. That is why we want to delete the coming-into-force clause in this legislation.

I do not understand the Government's logic. It says that it will never use Clause 139, but it has refused to delete it. It received a commitment that the United States would pass the same kind of legislation at the same time as we do, but it did not. The Government insists on proceeding anyway. That also seems illogical.

It is about as logical as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade (Mr. McDermid) who today claimed that the trade deal will be good for agriculture.

Mr. Malone: Hear, hear!

Mr. Benjamin: My hon. friend says: "Hear, hear". I want him to go and tell that to the grain producers of western Canada. Tell that to the 60,000 members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool who do not like losing the two-price wheat system which will cost producers \$260 million.

● (1300)

Mr. Belsher: What about the consumers?

Mr. Benjamin: I do not understand the logic. The Government says it is a good deal for agriculture, but we are going to take \$260 million from grain producers under the two-price system.

Mrs. Maily: Wrong again.

Mr. Benjamin: That is what the deal calls for.

Mr. Malone: No, it does not.

Mr. Benjamin: Yes, it does.

Mr. Malone: You get the same amount of money.