

Industry, Trade and Commerce Act

It was told—and, Madam Speaker, I did not believe it but I have a copy of the letter—that Shell Canada said they were aware that the product was not manufactured in Canada, that they had patents in the United States for it, and they might consider doing something about it in the distant future. Because of this situation the tax could not be removed. This leads me to wonder if the one hand knows what the other is doing. This seems to be a pretty piddling little bill to provide such a vast amount of knowledge that is obviously necessary.

It would seem to me that if you prove the commodity is not made in Canada, that there is the potential for making it here, then the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce should either agree to reduce the tariff or to assist somebody in the development of the product.

The company in question was a small one, in the flakeboard field—but flakeboard is important in Northern Ontario. The product is shipped to New York, and part of the raw material comes from Portland, Oregon, because there are not the resources in Northern Ontario to meet the demand. I was not able to persuade the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, however, to ask for a remission of the tariff so that the glue could be imported.

The hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) indicated that the bill would create a lot of new jobs. I hope he is right, but my small dealings with the department indicate that the bill will have to be much enlarged. It will have to have a lot more information in it than the present bill. From a quick reading all this bill says is that the information from the Department of National Revenue, which is privileged information and cannot be divulged because it is the private knowledge of a specific company, under certain circumstances can be divulged to the minister or an official of his department. For what purpose, Madam Speaker? The hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings believes it is going to produce a great rash of industries. I do not believe it is even going to solve the little problem I had about an adhesive that is not made in Canada. Because Shell Canada could make it if they wanted to, the 17 per cent tariff is not removed. This does not allow a small company in Northern Ontario to have at least a reasonable advantage in the marketplace, so I do not think it matters a tinker's dam whether the bill passes or not. In the first place it comes from the Senate, which makes it suspect because they are not in touch with things anyway.

It is a pious hope to believe that this is going to make the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce more valuable. I would suggest they give some consideration to the small problems brought to their attention. I am sure every member of the House who brings a problem to the department can provide the information on the company and all the input and invoices, or whatever is required.

It is my belief that when a company wants an advantage it is willing to provide the information, and it is not necessary to go to the Department of National Revenue for it. That department is sacrosanct; the information it has is not supposed to be leaked to anyone. Some businessmen do not think that protection is any great advantage. We live in the age of thievery by computer. If all you have to do is ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce to ask the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Basford) for

[Mr. Peters.]

some secret information, this measure will not do what the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings expects.

● (2150)

I listened to the minister and listened to the former minister of trade and commerce expressing the pious hope that this bill will help to solve some difficulties. The fact remains that most of our raw materials flow south and finished goods flow north, and releasing or not releasing a limited number of industrial secrets will not reverse the trend. Instead of spending our time in the House and committee discussing the passing of secrets between two ministers of the same government, we could better spend our time exhorting the department, in the words of the former minister of trade and commerce, to get off its fanny and sell and tell every other department to help our industry compete in the market place.

I, for one, think this bill does little except tinker with the present situation. It will not solve the problem of the entrepreneur who wants to sell. As it is, businessmen are inundated with paper work, but their problems persist and do not go away. I think our time could be better spent considering measures which will enable Canadian businessmen to compete in the marketplace. We should not waste time discussing silly bills like this which deal with the exchange of confidential information between two cabinet ministers.

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Madam Speaker, this is another very interesting bill which, if implemented, might enable the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) to provide greater protection to Canadian producers, more particularly in the area of textile and production of meat, specially poultry.

I wonder whether that legislation will be likely to really protect textile workers who for a few weeks now have been losing their jobs by the thousands. I often drew the attention of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) on the serious problem of textile product imports. Several members made representations to the minister so appropriate action could be implemented to protect jobs in the textile area and also our Canadian textile industries.

Recently, the minister answered a question by a member, saying that steps will be taken within a few months to ensure the efficiency of a truly appropriate protection. But God knows whether in a few months, the way things are going now, it will not be too late to really ensure the survival of that industry in Canada on which thousands of heads of families depend to provide for the needs of their families.

The situation is the same with respect to meat imports. I also drew the attention of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) a few weeks ago on the fact that poultry is imported from the south while quotas are imposed on our domestic producers. And that is going on under the benignant look at our Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce who should I think always be in close cooperation with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) who is putting up enormous efforts—I recognize it and I say so—