

Customs Act

affects government revenues and expenditures, because a private member can do very little about making suggestions for improvements in legislation of this kind. We are fortunate, in a sense, that through private member's bills we can make suggestions about such legislation as the Criminal Code. So long as such a bill does not involve government expenditures, worthwhile suggestions can come from the private members of this house. It might be interesting to go over the history of this parliament to see how much of the progressive legislation that is now on the books or is being contemplated found its first expression in the form of a private member's bill.

As an example of how archaic this legislation has become, we have only to look at what Bill S-10 is trying to change. It does not take into consideration the existing legislation nor the fact that we have a department, formerly called the department of defence production, which now has a new name and superior methods of finding customers for some of the goods that are abandoned. The existing legislation makes reference to the means of sale and specifies that it must be done by public auction. Certainly, this is recognized as unduly restrictive on the government's ability to find the best way of disposing of these goods. The existing legislation goes on to say in section 23 (2):

—if offered for sale for home consumption, or the charges, if offered for sale for exportation, such goods shall not be sold, but shall be destroyed.

One wonders what fine protectionist finger found its way into that legislation when it first saw the light of day. Imagine saying that unless you can get a certain amount for the goods, they have to be destroyed. This method is no longer acceptable, and I am glad to see that one of the purposes of Bill S-10 is to change this notice.

If we read the bill we will run across a rather interesting little item which appears under clause 11, subsection (2) of section 170 which reads in part as follows:

—shall be entitled to demand for each certificate a fee of fifty cents before delivering the same.

It is quite obvious that you can no longer issue a certificate for 50 cents. In fact, it is hard to hold a two minute conversation with a civil servant without costing the government more, let alone deliver a receipt. Therefore, very wisely, the amended bill permits the government to establish a fee that is more in harmony with the actual cost to the government.

[Mr. Saltsman.]

This bill will be going to the Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs Committee, and like the other legislation that has gone to that committee will receive a very careful scrutiny. Perhaps, it may emerge a better bill. I certainly hope the government will show a willingness to accept amendments that members of that committee may see fit to offer, because it has been our experience that some excellent amendments have been put forth by members of the Opposition. When those amendments have been incorporated in the bill it has been an improvement on what was first presented to the committee.

Therefore I say on behalf of this party that I am very pleased to see Bill S-10 introduced to the house and sent to the committee from here.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to speak on this bill but for certain reasons will do so. I have always been interested in the operations that take place in customs offices, and in reading this bill, which I did not have the opportunity of seeing previously, I find a number of changes that will have some significance. One of the changes which I notice is that those areas which were originally designated as ports of entry are now referred to differently since these ports no longer exist. In fact, they have not existed for a period of time. This bill removes those ports of entry which no longer exist. I suggest that there is a better way of doing it. Obviously, places where there is no physical facility for bringing in goods or no collector stationed, cannot be designated as ports of entry.

For many years the argument has been advanced that goods that are imported into Canada at an excessively high cost and were seized for non-payment of duty or because of illegal entry had to be sold at a sufficiently high price to cover the costs or else the law indicated the goods had to be destroyed. I am sure that years ago at a time when our armed forces travelled frequently across the border and when there was some difficulty in purchasing such commodities as cigarettes, which were both expensive and restricted as to brand, many people went over to the United States, particularly servicemen who lived near the border.

● (4:10 p.m.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order. It is my duty to remind hon. members that it is past four o'clock. I understood that this bill was to be given second reading within a short