he wanted from the official. I know that basically this particular bill is a housekeeping item, and I doubt if that particular thing was covered. I want to check to see if it is being looked into, however.

I understand that if the representations have been made a decision would be made on the temporary tariff basis. The official is not aware at this time, however, if the representations went directly to the minister or to the department, but they would be considered.

Mr. Alexander: I think I can inform the parliamentary secretary that my case went to the minister in order to register concern, but perhaps that does not make any difference. I understand the parliamentary secretary is stating that the department is aware of the matter and it will be considered. I should like to be sure, so that I can send copies of *Hansard* to my constituents.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Chairman, knowing the minister as I do, I can assure the hon. member that if that letter is with the minister it will be considered by the department.

Mr. MacLean: Madam Chairman, I have one brief general question for the parliamentary secretary. In the list of reductions there are quite a number of raw materials for food items such as vegetables, potatoes, certain types of fruit that are widely produced in Canada, and such things as bananas which we have to import. Have representations been received from producer organizations of these types of food products, and do the reductions or changes meet with their approval? Have they acquiesced in these reductions in most cases? I am thinking chiefly of vegetables, potatoes and fruit.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Chairman, representations were made, and as a result the ad valorem rate was removed. The rate is being restored on asparagus, cucumbers, tomatoes, sweet cherries and strawberries because of the seasonal production pattern of those products. Representations were made and were given effect to in this case.

Schedule I agreed to.

Schedules II to IV inclusive, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When shall the said bill be read the third time?

Some hon. Members: By leave, now.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

[Mr. Cullen.]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE—SUGGESTED CLOSING OF SUPPLEMENTARY OFFICE IN EDMONTON—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, when man bites dog that is supposed to be news. I guess it is news when a politician wants to close a government office instead of opening a new one, but these are unusual times. Government is top heavy in this country. The proliferation of social programs threatens to bankrupt us. The bureaucracy which involves their administration threatens to smother us.

I do not think it is good enough to come here and talk in general terms, so I want to be specific and tell the government it will be aiding the taxpayers, not to mention restoring our faith in the governmental process, by closing the unemployment insurance office in Edmonton-Strathcona.

I am not talking about the main office in downtown Edmonton which is capable of serving the whole city. I am not talking about reducing UIC benefits to those who have a legitimate claim. What I am talking about is the superfluous bureaucratic excess which exists in the year old UIC office—the second one in Edmonton—which occupies a floor and a half, plus store front, of the most expensive property on Whyte Avenue in Edmonton.

● (2200)

On October 23 I raised this matter with the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras), following previous correspondence which he was good enough to acknowledge, in which I had made representation to him that the office should be closed on the basis of a study I had done about its usefulness. He said at that time that, if my observations were proved valid, he would not fail to use the opportunity to reduce the service. Following that I went around and had a long conference in the office with Mr. H. Verheijen, who is the district manager in Edmonton, and with Mr. Jack Nicol, who is the manager of the Edmonton-Strathcona office. This conference confirmed me in my judgment that taxpayers would be benefited by the closing of the office.

The number of employees in the office which, as I mentioned, opened one year ago, had been reduced from 81 to 45. The piece load has dwindled by about one-third within one year; so, too has the caseload of the office downtown. My point is, and I think the facts verify this, that the total number of people in Edmonton now receiving unemployment insurance and the total number of employees processing the claims are both less than they were at the time the Edmonton-Strathcona office was opened.

At the time when this office was programmed, unemployment was high and was forecast to remain high. As we know, unemployment in Alberta is today at 1.7 per cent, surely among the lowest in the country, and there are, according to figures released by Canada Manpower, 5,752 job vacancies in the city of Edmonton alone. There are more than 16,000 vacancies in all Alberta. Actually there are substantially more job vacancies than the figures I have mentioned indicate, because some jobs are open but not registered with Canada Manpower. Actually there is a