

Customs Tariff

competitor to compete with the sales of people from south of the border, where there is not only a bigger market but also bigger plants and equipment with which to manufacture those articles. So I ask the government to give those people the protection they need so that we can carry on and keep the unemployment rolls down.

In conclusion I would say that the government needs to take a long look at two of the industries in my own riding which would be vitally affected.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bill Kempling (Haltow-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have just a few words to say. I would like to comment briefly on the customs tariffs in general. The speaker who preceded me made mention of the tire industry and how a long look has to be taken as far as customs tariffs are concerned. Many hon. members have had representations made to them from the various members of the United Rubber Workers concerned about tariffs on tires. Their concern was the fact that the tariff on tires has bounced up and down like the proverbial rubber ball or yo-yo, between 12½ per cent and 17½ per cent. The concern is really with regard to what they are doing at GATT regarding tariffs on tires. They looked back at the volume of our consumption and the amount which has been imported in the last few years.

In 1972, of the tires used in this country, 30 per cent were imported. In 1973, 45 per cent of the tires we used were imported. In 1974 the figure rose to 60 per cent. Part of that rise in 1974 was the result of a couple of long strikes at Firestone, and particularly at Goodyear. That is reflected in the numbers of tires which were imported, but the real concern is that in the process of our negotiations with GATT on tariffs generally we may find ourselves negotiating ourselves out of the tire industry in this country.

There are a large number of United Rubber Workers who are out of work for one reason or another, and they are concerned that if there is not some protection the industry will not continue to be viable in this country. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) told us that one of his sectorial studies of the industry is trying to restructure the tire industry to be more responsive to the need for the type of tires that are used in Canada.

One of the concerns which has been expressed is that only 50 per cent of the radial tires we need in this country are produced here, and the rest of them are imported. Inasmuch as the automobile manufacturers are primarily using radial tires, the rubber companies and the rubber workers can see a considerable market there, and their concern is that we really should be moving a little faster to try to produce more of what is required by the automotive industry in Canada.

These are the main concerns which have been expressed, and the United Rubber Workers have done a very good job in circularizing these concerns to members of parliament. We feel that some statement on behalf of the government has to be made regarding the tire industry and tariffs in general, so that adequate planning can go forward to produce more of the tires we require.

That is about the sum and substance of the remarks I wanted to make on the tire industry. Other speakers have commented about the television industry. We have heard representations from labour groups, primarily about small television sets coming into this country. In fact we understand that there is an action under the anti-dumping provisions which is looking into this, and I suppose it is really not proper that we comment very much on it while that investigation is going on, but there is a real concern that as time goes on we will negotiate ourselves out of the television business. I think in view of the fact that we have a good and viable industry in the country now, we should at least protect a good portion of it and see that we do not lose that expertise.

Someone suggested that because of my physique I should comment on wooden hoops, one of the tariff items here, but I think that person was being facetious when he said that. My wife has me on a very strict diet, and I hope when I return after our recess, whenever that comes, hon. members will see the results.

I would like to reiterate that we are really concerned about the tire industry. We hope that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce will be able to inform us later on in this session just what progress has been made in that regard, because it is of vital interest to a large number of Canadians and, of course, there is a considerable investment in that industry.

● (2040)

Mr. Cecil Smith (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, it certainly gives me great pleasure tonight to speak on Bill C-67 because I want to talk about the port of Churchill and how the Customs Tariff Act affects it.

Last year the port of Churchill did not have a single pound of imports for the simple reason that there was no incentive for anyone to ship through the port. Some incentive could be given to customers to bring goods in through the port of Churchill. The only thing that has been imported in recent years is Scotch from Great Britain.

An hon. Member: Don't knock it.

Mr. Smith (Churchill): The customs tariff on that item was certainly too high and so the provinces discontinued bringing spirits through the port of Churchill.

A fair number of tractors from Germany used to come through the port, but this trade has also been discontinued.

I think what is happening is that the government is looking at places like Churchill and trying to write them off. What it should be doing is providing some incentive, and perhaps declaring the port of Churchill a free port. We would then have the problem of trying to bring imports in through the central part of Canada, but we would have customers flocking to Churchill to ship material in, and of course this would help the port develop to its full potential.

Free trade is what we need, and the government should look at making Churchill a free port. The facilities are there; the grainhandling facilities are there. The port is open three months of the year and it should be used every day it is open. When you only have an 88-day shipping