

taken to avoid a future weakening of the tariff protection applicable to some light wool fabrics, and reductions in customs duties on unprocessed wool and worsted wool fabrics for dyeing and finishing. Measures have already been taken to maintain five temporary tariff items concerning wool fabrics used for men's clothing.

With Bill C-71, the Government will complete the implementation of recommendations made by the Tariff Board in phase I of its report entitled "Tariff items applicable to goods made or not made in Canada". The impact of those amendments is wide ranging. Three Tariff Board examples derive from the agreement between Canada and the United States with respect to the Tokyo Round multilateral trade negotiations. Last December Parliament authorized the repeal of the requirement whereby imported goods must be of a category or type made or not made in Canada so they may be admitted at specified rates, in the case of 19 tariff items. Bill C-71 contains similar provisions concerning other items referred to in phase I of the report.

Several amendments result from representations made by the private sector. Most of them reduce customs duties on various items not made in Canada. Others reinstate the tariff protection which had been removed after decisions related to the classification of goods had been appealed. The effect of these changes is quite varied. Three examples should give Hon. Members and idea of the benefits which would result from the proposed changes.

First, aluminium construction drop-centre livestock trailers will be imported duty free, thereby reducing the road transportation costs for cattle raisers and trucking companies.

Second, all workers who have to use safety helmets, goggles and face shields for welders will know that the costs of these important pieces of safety equipment will remain the lowest possible, thanks to the duty free import of all these safety items.

Third, all those who wish to see their kids play football with the proper equipment will be delighted to learn that football helmets, face masks and shoulder pads will be imported duty free.

In order to rationalize the administration of the tariff by the Department of National Revenue, especially in the case of travellers, Canadian tourists—and this is very important—may from now on import duty free up to \$100 in foreign goods as often as they wish during the year, providing they have been out of Canada for at least 48 hours. At present, they may do so just once every quarter. This is a step toward a kind of rational and reasonable form of free trade.

In another area, the Deputy Minister of National Revenue may now prescribe or eliminate seasonal tariffs on some horticultural implements the production of which is only occasional in Canada. Thus, Canadian farmers will not only have the required protection at the appropriate time, but consumers

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will also be able to purchase imported products at the lowest possible cost when they are no longer available from Canadian producers, which is once again quite reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that Bill C-71 contains a number of tariff measures of major importance to certain sectors of the Canadian economy as a whole, and in some cases, to certain individuals in particular.

Bill C-71 is also part of the international agreements made by Canada and it follows up a number of specific commitments we have contracted internationally.

This brief summary of the provisions of this Bill should provide enough information on the reasons why Bill C-71 must be considered and approved rapidly by all Members of the House of Commons who are concerned about the well-being of our fellow citizens and all Canadian consumers. We are willing to answer any relevant questions.

● (1530)

[English]

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, initially we did not anticipate a prolonged debate on Bill C-71 and we felt that most questions could be raised in the legislative committee. However, after seeing the information which was revealed this weekend in an article in *The Citizen*, indicating that 1,152 jobs were to be cut from the Customs Department, we want to scrutinize this Bill and similar pieces of legislation proposed by the Government. The proposed cut-backs to the Customs jobs are unwarranted. We support the allegations made by the union that the cut-backs would result in a growth of illicit drugs and pornography entering into the country. We seriously question whether Customs will be able to do its job in an adequate manner if such a severe cut is made to the number of employees in that Department. The person-years for Excise, Customs and corporate administration amount to some 10,148. If it is slashed by 1,152 jobs, it is a dramatic cut. I wonder whether that reduced number of employees within the Department will be able to carry out its important mandate. I also wonder about the economics of the Government.

With the new system which is being proposed by the Department, packages would be sent to importers and an honours system would be introduced wherein it would depend upon importers to pay whatever duties are owing. It does not take much logic to recognize that a fair number of people will just forget to pay the customs duties which are owing. Will the Government introduce a new tax collection system or customs collection system? The economics just does not make sense. I would suggest that a Customs officer collects more than his salary in duties and therefore revenues to the federal Government. To cut the number of Customs officers would mean that we would have less service and that we would have more illicit drugs and pornographic material entering the country without being detected. Also it will mean a reduction in services to the public, whether it be in Customs offices along the border or within cities. Definitely it will mean hardship to many employees within the Department. The announcement talked