

Customs Tariff

The Chairman: It is correct that we are on schedule I. The difficulty we are faced with is that schedule II has already been carried. If the hon. member seeks the unanimous consent of the committee, he might be allowed to make his comments. Shall schedule I carry?

An hon. Member: On division.

Mr. Haidasz: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance what consideration is being given to representations from various ethnocultural groups in Canada who wish to receive some relief from import duties on national costumes and rare musical instruments that are being used by dance and music ensembles in performing their cultural functions.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, there has been a good deal of thought in the correspondence I have had with the hon. gentleman on this subject. A good deal of ethnic dress is manufactured in Canada, and one has to consider the balance of the Canadian as against the foreign interest. I think the hon. gentleman will recognize that in eliminating the sales tax on footwear and clothing we have gone some way toward satisfying the quite legitimate requests that associations across Canada have put to us through the hon. gentleman.

The Chairman: Shall schedule I carry?

An hon. Member: On division.
Schedule I agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, taking up your suggestion concerning schedule II, I wonder if we might have unanimous consent to revert to it, not only for questioning by my colleague but because there are one or two questions that I hoped to put yesterday.

The Chairman: As I mentioned, this would need unanimous consent. Does the committee give consent to our reverting to schedule II?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chairman: It is agreed. The hon. member for York-Simcoe.

Mr. Stevens: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank hon. members for giving unanimous consent. I would refer the minister to an item appearing on page 8 of the bill, item No. 8717-1, onions. As I understand it, some concern has been expressed by the onion producers of Canada in that they feel two things are unfair to their industry: one is that the 1½ cents per pound tariff which is shown under the tariff item is lower than the 1¾ cents tariff that now prevails in the United States with respect to the exportation of onions from Canada to that country.

I wonder, first of all, if the minister could give some explanation of why these two tariffs are not comparable, and secondly, has consideration been given to having a shorter free period for the importation of onion? I am informed by spokesmen for the industry that they feel they can supply the Canadian market for the entire 12 months, and they feel the eight-week free period contem-

plated here is a serious matter in regard to their current production. I understand they have almost 1,200,000 bags in storage at the present time, and they are fearful that if this matter is not tightened up they could have a serious carryover problem in the industry and importation would be higher than they think is desirable.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, of course, there is not any necessary symmetry between the American rate of duty on a particular item and the Canadian rate of duty. They are not reciprocal. They depend on market conditions, negotiating procedures, and so on, concerning the items. We received representations from the Canadian Horticultural Council and I referred to the Tariff Board a complete review of current Canadian tariffs on fresh and processed fruits and vegetables. The tariff on onions is among them.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, in view of the courtesy of the committee in permitting us to revert to schedule II, I should like to call attention to one other item which I do not think has been discussed in the debate. Late last fall I had communication from a number of those engaged in the mushroom growing industry in my province of British Columbia who are greatly disturbed by the threat to the viability of their industry by the importation of mushrooms from the Far East. I made inquiries of the department regarding this particular matter and was advised that they were aware of the situation and had been successful in achieving an understanding with Korea that that country would voluntarily limit its exports to Canada during the year 1974. That is the reply I received in November or December. The department also said that they had failed to achieve a similar agreement with other exporting countries.

I would ask the minister if the agreement with Korea has been renewed for 1975, and if he has been successful in achieving similar agreements with some of the other countries who export mushrooms to Canada.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, mushrooms, of course, do not appear on the schedule and I cannot give the answer off the top of my head. I will undertake to write the hon. member and give him details on that question.

The Chairman: Shall schedule II carry?
Schedule II agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): On division.
Clause 1 agreed to.
Title agreed to.
Bill reported.

● (1630)

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I undertook, through my parliamentary secretary, that when we reached third reading I would give the House a report on behalf of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) and on my