

*Customs Tariff (No. 2)*

On clause 2—*Schedule A further amended.*

**Mr. Gillies:** Is it the intention of the minister to call each of the items in the schedules?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** I must say that it had not been my intention, no.

**Mr. Gillies:** I think a number of members of our party wish to make observations on a variety of these items. There has been a considerable number of representations about practically every one of these items in the schedules on behalf of the various interested groups. I wish to call the minister's attention to the items dealing with the removal of tariffs on frozen foods. I am curious to learn why the minister thought it would be advisable, or effective policy, to reduce tariffs on this particular item, since it would have the effect of virtually eliminating the frozen food producers in our country at this time.

• (2050)

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Chairman, we have received representations in this regard from several concerns, even a local Ottawa concern. I might say that we are taking the position I have taken in respect of all these items. The Minister of Agriculture and myself have set up a joint committee consisting of deputy ministers and the assistant deputy minister of my department. We are analysing each one of these items to see whether, as I said in the budget speech, it has had an adverse effect on employment or production or an adverse effect on the ability of the Canadian producer to compete. If a case can be made, as it was in respect of greenhouse tomatoes, cherries and so on, we act. I am aware of the particular representations that have been relayed indirectly by the hon. member for Don Valley and we have them under active consideration.

Under clause 3(3) of the bill, if sanctioned by parliament, we have the opportunity to restore the duties to what they were as of February 19, 1973, providing a case is proven, and that is the reason for this ability to restore.

**Mr. Gillies:** Mr. Chairman, is it my understanding that the minister has the authority to restore the tariff at any particular time when representations are made, or must this be done at the end of one year?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** First of all, we have a temporary one-year tariff reduction on a number of items contained in Schedules A and B attached to this bill. This is temporary, and the tariff can be restored even prior to February 19, 1974 if a case can be made to show that the reduction adversely affects employment or the ability of Canadian producers to compete. Under clause 3(3) parliament gives the governor in council an opportunity to restore the tariff to what it was prior to the introduction of this bill, and at any time.

**Mr. Gillies:** Has the minister had any cause to restore any of the tariffs to this particular date?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, the tariff on greenhouse tomatoes.

[Mr. Hargrave.]

**Mr. Whittaker:** Mr. Chairman, the horticultural council has been very concerned about many of the reductions in tariffs covered under clause 2. It has made representations to the minister seeking to have certain of these tariffs restored. I should like to bring to the minister's attention a number of these items and ask whether at this stage he is ready to reconsider his position. I refer to the following items:

8702-1 Asparagus

We request that the MFN ad valorem rate of 10 per cent apply in any fiscal year April 1 to July 15 and March 1 to March 31 except when the seasonal specific rate is applied.

They also request that the ad valorem tariff of 10 per cent be reinstated in respect of cabbages for the period June 1 to February 28, except when the seasonal specific rate applies.

The next one is 8712-1 in respect of cucumbers, and it states:

The 22 week 2¼ cent per pound specific duty period is too short to give tariff protection for the full period of greenhouse and field production of cucumbers for the fresh market. Greenhouse production begins about March 1, immediately followed by field production to first frost about October 10 or a period of 32 weeks. Now that the 10 per cent ad valorem is removed the industry only has 22 weeks of protection.

We request the reinstatement of the 10 per cent ad valorem tariff to apply March 1 to November 30 except when the seasonal specific rate applies.

The next one is 8717-1 in respect of onions, and it states:

Although the seasonal specific rate applies for 44 weeks, which covers most of our marketing season, an 8 week "free" period can cause quite disproportionate damage because onions are storable. Onions imported in volume during the free period could seriously disrupt sales of early set onions.

The next one is 9203-1 in respect of sweet cherries, and it states:

The 2 cent per pound seasonal protection for 7 weeks was not applied last year because 10 per cent ad valorem afforded greater protection than the specific, i.e., the f.o.b. price last year was from 40 cents per pound U.S.A. source. This means the ad valorem protection amounted to 40 X 10 per cent = 4 cents per pound, while the specific is only worth 2 cents per pound.

We request that the 10 per cent ad valorem rate be reinstated to apply June 15 to August 15 except when the seasonal specific rate applies.

The next one is 9205-1 in respect of peaches, and it states:

We request that the 10 per cent ad valorem rate be reinstated to apply July 1 to October 31, except when the seasonal specific rate applies.

The next one is 9206-1 in respect of pears, and it states:

The seasonal specific rate does not cover our normal marketing period for pears. Extensive research has been devoted to extending our marketing season for late pears, which has now been brought to the end of February and into March.

We request that the 10 per cent ad valorem rate be reinstated to apply July 15 to February 28, except when the seasonal specific rate applies.

The next one is 9211-1 in respect of strawberries, and it states:

The loss of the 10 per cent ad valorem duty is serious for strawberry producers who are already subjected to extensive inroads of import competition. We request partial reinstatement of the 10 per cent ad valorem duty to apply June 1 to August 31, except when the seasonal specific rate applies.