

*Customs Act*

bill as soon as possible and to refer it to the committee. The purpose of the bill is as follows:

The purpose of Bill S-10 is to update certain provisions of the Customs Act giving force of law to a number of proposals presented by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and, besides, authorizing amendments which would be more in keeping with the modern and more efficient methods of clearance of imported goods and which would meet the requirements of Canadian industry.

It is proposed to authorize by legislation the collection of revenues on goods which formerly had to be destroyed according to the law.

Previously, the goods had to be destroyed unless they could be sold, so as to produce an amount sufficient to pay the duties imposed on them.

*[English]*

Under the proposed amendments, and in keeping with modern business requirements, greater flexibility would be permitted in respect of the examination of imported goods. It is also proposed that the period during which eligibility for certain types of refund payments may be established be extended to overcome the difficulty the importing public has experienced in establishing entitlement to refund within the shorter period specified in the present act.

*[Translation]*

It is also proposed Mr. Speaker, to ratify the long-standing practice of granting a refund of duties, for the sake of justice, on goods imported at a high rate of duty, but which are subsequently diverted to a use for which they could have been imported at a lower rate of duty than that actually paid when imported.

*[English]*

In brief, Mr. Speaker, this bill simply has as its purpose the implementation of certain recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the granting of authority for up-dating and improving certain departmental procedures and practices.

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, although the minister did not say it, I suppose he could have said that really the purpose of this bill is to provide for some minor housekeeping in the Department of National Revenue, Customs and Excise Division. It certainly is not my purpose to deal in great detail with the principle of the bill as it now stands. The bill will go to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, where we can look into these matters generally.

I would, however, like to make one observation in connection primarily with the purpose of clause 1 of the bill. I refer to a matter raised by the minister's colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford), when dealing with Bill S-4. That bill was considered by the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs and concerned the Precious Metals Marking Act. That act is very straightforward, but lo and behold, near the end of it there is a reference to the Fisheries Act.

One might well ask, why does the Fisheries Act intrude upon the Precious Metals Marking Act? The answer is, because there is a seizure procedure in the Fisheries Act which is deemed to be possibly the best method of dealing at the present time with articles which should be forfeit to the Crown or received on behalf of the Crown. I think it is absolute nonsense that there should be these cross-references to other acts. This matter will be discussed at the committee stage. The minister may share some of my concern in this regard, because my experience in the Department of National Revenue has led me to the following conclusion.

● (4:00 p.m.)

There should be one act that deals with commodities that are seized or forfeit to the crown for their disposal, then we would not have to have this nonsense of cross references to one act or to another. So, I am sure we will be able to explore that particular facet of the problem at the committee stage. Therefore, I would commend the bill to the house for second reading and referral to the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

**Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see before us Bill S-10, an act to amend the Customs Act, because I think it is long overdue. It is a very good example of how archaic legislation can become if it is not under constant scrutiny. My distinguished and learned friend, the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) alluded to the fishy nature of seizure procedures, if I may be excused for putting it that way. One tends to think that much of our legislation was drawn up at the time when we were basically trapping animals and fishing and when those were our only occupations. Perhaps this legislation has not been reviewed since. The Customs Act is perhaps a good example of that kind of legislation which has not been updated. There is a need for a continuous evaluation of legislation, particularly that which