

result we brought in some recommendations to the House of Commons. I would just like some assurance from the minister that these items are comparable to certain items which were recommended for rates similar to these and perhaps the minister could indicate in a comparable form the items he believes to be comparable. Normally I would not think an item involving spending on a consumer or industrial level of the size I suspect is involved in these items to be dealt with without reference to the tariff board. I should like the minister to make some comment on the increases that he proposes here, having regard to the fact that this, again, has not been referred to the tariff board.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): This takes us back to the tariff board's report of 1952 on plastics. Following that report, items were written into the Canadian tariff with the rates which are proposed in the present resolution, namely British preferential, 15 per cent; most-favoured-nation, 20 per cent; general tariff 25 per cent. At that time, foamed and expanded synthetic resins were not made in Canada. They are made in Canada today, and this amendment is simply designed to apply to them the same rates as were recommended by the board in 1952 with respect to similar products which the board found to be made in Canada at that time and to be entitled to protection.

I may say there are several companies now making this product in Canada, and we are recommending the same rates should apply to foamed and expanded resins as apply to comparable products. Under comparable products I might refer to item 908 of the tariff which applies to manufactures of synthetic resins including floor and wall tiles containing synthetic resins. This is the general item. The rates are: British preferential, 15 per cent; most-favoured-nation, 20 per cent and the general tariff, 20 per cent. Another item that is comparable is item 918b which applies to cellulose sponges and which carries the same rates, 15 per cent, 20 per cent and 30 per cent.

As far as the amendment is concerned I may say that this product in sheet form has always been classified under these various items. However, for the sake of clarity and ease of administration, the word "sheets" is being added to both items in the amendment.

Mr. Pickersgill: These items, as the minister has said, are, of course, being subjected to the same duty as certain other products of a generally similar character. But it will be recalled that these are duties which were put on only after an inquiry by the tariff board, and since there was no inquiry made by the

tariff board in this case I wonder if the minister could tell us what it was that induced the government to apply these rates. After all, they represent an impost on the general public, as do all such tariffs, and presumably the government had stronger reasons for taking the action it did than mere reasoning by analogy.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): We received strong representations from Canadian producers who pointed out that there had been a change in the forms of production since the tariff board wrote its report in 1952, and there was no reason to doubt that had these producers been producing foamed and expanded synthetic resins in 1952 the tariff board would have proposed to extend to them the rates which were recommended by the board in its report on these comparable products such as I have mentioned in items 908 and 918b.

Mr. Benidickson: Since the minister announced on June 17 his intention to increase tariff protection for these particular products, may I ask whether he has received any protests? He has mentioned the people who have applied for the increase.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The matter has been discussed with us since that time by several interested parties, and in the course of that discussion I think a clear understanding was brought about as to the effect, and we are not aware that there are any objections outstanding now with respect to this proposed change.

Mr. Pickersgill: I should like to say just another word about this matter. The minister pointed out earlier today that I have a consumer bias, and I do not object to that. The effect of these tariff changes would almost certainly be to increase the price of these products to someone. I assume that this will be the effect, otherwise there seems to be very little point in making them. Under the tariff board hearing procedure which has been in effect for a long time, consumers and potential consumers do have an opportunity to attend and make their representations. It does occur to me to wonder why it was not possible to have the usual procedure—the procedure of tariff board hearings—followed in this case.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): We do not send everything to the tariff board. As I pointed out in the budget speech, there are a great many individual items with which it would be quite hopeless to clutter the tariff board. The tariff board's docket is a very heavy one and we cannot expect the board to deal with a multitude of small individual items. Besides, the case here was very clear, and a strong case was made out for the need