

*Customs Tariff*

complains that we did not issue a press statement or make a separate report to the house earlier than June 17 in the budget speech.

**Mr. Benidickson:** It is 1957 I am concerned with, of course.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** I can assure my hon. friend that the negotiations I referred to were concluded so short a time before the budget speech that the budget was the first convenient opportunity to make them known to the house. In these particular negotiations we were not seeking a change in the United States tariff; we were seeking freedom to make changes in the Canadian tariff items in accordance with the recommendations with respect to those items on which the tariff board had made recommendations. We negotiated with the United States over a period of time with the result that the United States did not make any changes in its tariff. So on that side, as a result of the negotiations, we simply have a maintenance of the status quo. But with respect to the items of the Canadian tariff we have obtained a concession on the part of the United States that gave us liberty to make the changes in our tariff that are embodied in the resolutions now before the committee, so far as those items had previously been bound, and have undertaken to make certain changes in our tariff as the *quid pro quo* to the United States; so what we bring before the committee now is a complete package, and the results of those negotiations are fully embodied in the terms of the resolutions.

My hon. friend goes on from that point and quotes what I gather was a newspaper article containing, I may say, a great deal of wild speculation about what were the items on which the negotiations proceeded.

**Mr. Benidickson:** That is usually my hon. friend's comment in debate, of course.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** It is a very accurate one.

**Mr. Benidickson:** Let us continue item by item.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Let me talk about the hon. gentleman's reference to the fourth item of smelt. I can tell him that the changes proposed in the tariff on smelt—and was it oysters or lobsters?

**Mr. Benidickson:** I think smelt is a better item to take.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Yes, item 115b. The newspaper article was quite erroneous in its speculation on that point.

**Mr. Benidickson:** It was not a bound item?  
[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** It is not a bound item and the reduction that is proposed here in the resolution was made at the request of the Canadian fisheries council.

**Mr. Benidickson:** What reasons did they advance when they requested the decrease?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** I shall be glad to deal with this when we come to that item if my hon. friend wishes. I am just dealing now with the point he raised at the outset. The further matter he mentioned was the change contemplated in item 438d.

I may say to him that the changes proposed in item 438d were made at the request of the Canadian automotive chamber of commerce and at the request also of the automotive parts association representing the manufacturers of automotive parts.

**Mr. Benidickson:** Were there any representations from the united automobile workers of America?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** We did not hear from them on that point. Perhaps we should wait until we reach the particular item before going into the details.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I should like to ask the minister a question with respect to his answer to the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River. Do I understand the minister to say that even after these negotiations have been completed it is considered contrary to public policy to make a specific statement during the currency of the agreement? I understood the minister to say that when the agreement was renewed parliament was told what the concessions were and what the concessions made by other countries were, as Mr. Howe did on a couple of occasions to which the hon. gentleman referred, but that during the currency of a negotiation, even though this particular negotiation was itself concluded, parliament was not told that the reason for these changes was negotiations under GATT?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** My friend has used the expression "during the currency of the agreement". What I was directing my remarks to, to which he has alluded, was the course of the negotiations.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Oh, quite.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** There has been no attempt ever made, and I think the reason is obvious, to trace the course of negotiations, the various steps that enter into the bargaining.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I would agree with that at once.