

Customs Tariff

should be given every possible latitude in this highly protectionist speech.

Mr. McDonald (Hamilton South): Do you want the job of Speaker?

The Chairman: Order. As chairman of this committee I regret to say I must ask hon. members of all parties to adhere to the terms of the resolution being discussed at the present time and although some latitude may be permitted in debate we must respect the principle of article 59, subparagraph 2 of the standing order which says that relevancy must be observed in debate.

Mr. Benidickson: There seems to be unanimous consent.

The Chairman: Again I ask the hon. member to keep his remarks as close to the resolution as possible.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, I assure you I had no intention of saying anything more about that subject than to reply concisely to remarks that have been made about it by hon. members opposite in the course of their speeches today.

Hon. members opposite had something to say about the reaction in the United Kingdom. It is true that in several of the journals there and in the case of one or two trade associations, where naturally a proposal of this kind could hardly be expected to be received with cheers, there was expression of regret at the action taken, but to picture that as a general reaction throughout the United Kingdom is not only to exaggerate but to distort the facts. I will say that if there was anything lacking in an unfavourable response in the United Kingdom whatever was lacking has been supplied by hon. members opposite, for they have spent every effort in publicizing to the utmost every unfavourable aspect of that reaction.

Mr. Pickersgill: You are now trying to stifle freedom of speech.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Indeed, they have done their best to trumpet this aspect of the reaction in the United Kingdom and the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillington was at his distorting best this morning or worst, depending on your point of view, when he said that this was kicking the British in the teeth.

Mr. Pickersgill: If the minister would prefer it I would be willing to substitute the word "stomach".

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): So far as any statement made by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillington is concerned, if you wish to come close to the facts the very best thing you can do is to turn his sentence

[Mr. Pearson.]

completely around, make it read exactly the opposite and you will probably come fairly close to the truth.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the minister permit a question?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): My time is nearly up. I will permit a question then. I have not time to be interrupted now.

The Chairman: It is the privilege of the minister to continue his speech and if the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillington has remarks to make he can make them after the minister has finished.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, it is worth recalling that there have been some very different statements made in responsible quarters in the United Kingdom from those that my hon. friends read to the house in the course of their selective treatment of the subject. Here is a statement that has appeared within the last several weeks in the annual report of Patons and Baldwins Limited, one of the largest woollen operators in the United Kingdom. In referring to conditions in Canada they say:

In Canada the textile trade has continued in the doldrums and it is difficult at present to see how and when recovery will come. The Canadian government have recently announced their intention to increase the duties on imports of wool cloth from the United Kingdom but to maintain, in the face of imports from other countries such as Italy, the margin of British tariff preference. Though this in itself has no immediate effect on your company, Canadian spinners have made an application to the tariff board for an increase in yarn import duties. Undoubtedly the Canadian textile industry is in urgent need of a measure of protection if it is to revive or indeed to survive.

That is the statement in the annual report of one of the largest woollen manufacturers in the United Kingdom.

There is nothing symbolic in this proposal, Mr. Chairman, as hon. members opposite sought to pretend. The concern that has been expressed in some quarters in the United Kingdom stemmed in considerable part from the fact that the tariff board recommended an increase only in the British preferential rate and did not recommend an increase in the most-favoured-nation rate which would have preserved the extent of the British preference. In the budget speech, if I may remind hon. members, we indicated that we were going to initiate negotiations with the countries concerned with a view to maintaining the preference that has existed.

There is urgency in this situation. That is the reason this amendment has been included in the recommendations submitted to the house as part of the budget.

We were told this morning that the government has adopted a high protection approach.