

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, July 15, 1958

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

FINANCE

TEXTILES—TABLING OF FURTHER TARIFF BOARD REPORT

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I should like to table copies in English and in French of a further report relative to reference No. 125 on textiles, which I have received from the chairman of the tariff board. I am also tabling a transcript of the evidence presented to the board at its public hearings.

This report deals with three groups of textile materials, namely rags and waste of various fibres, slivers, etc., of wool or hair, and rovings and yarns of wool or hair. In general the recommendations of the board would have the effect of substantially simplifying the tariff schedule and of reducing the number of items by eliminating certain end use items.

With respect to the first group of items, the board recommends that rags and waste of all fibres which are to be further processed be classified under a single item and receive duty free entry. At present these materials enter under 13 different tariff items carrying varying rates of duty, although for the most part they are now duty free.

With respect to the second group of items consisting of slivers and other forms of wool and hair in the stage preceding rovings and yarns, the main purpose of the board's recommendations is to clarify the nomenclature and classification of these materials.

In the third group of items, rovings and yarns of wool or hair, the board recommends a small increase in the specific duties under both the British preferential and most favoured nation tariffs. Here again the number of items is being reduced. In making this recommendation the board points out that the major proportion of the yarns used in Canadian woollen mills is produced in integrated plants.

It can be seen that the items covered in this report are related, in part, to other items in the textile schedule which are still before the board. The board has recently concluded its hearings on cottons and will be proceeding with hearings on synthetic textiles, knitted goods and narrow fabrics. The government does not intend to propose to the house any tariff changes relating to the report just

tabled until it has received further relevant reports from the board; and in the light of the board's program of work it is clear that no new tariff proposals in this field should be expected during the current session of parliament.

Mr. W. M. Benidickson (Kenora-Rainy River): Could I ask the minister whether any of the items referred to are bound by treaty?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I think so, Mr. Speaker. In any event such bindings as do enter into this matter would have to be considered in relation to the rather broad reclassification which the board has recommended.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

MIDDLE EAST—STATEMENT ON CURRENT SITUATION

Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, no doubt the house will expect me to inform it with respect to some of the grave events now occurring in the Middle East, events which have led to the landing of a force of approximately 5,000 United States troops in Lebanon this morning.

We were notified yesterday evening of the United States decision to take this urgent step, and I need hardly state that we are in very close touch with the United States authorities about this matter. President Eisenhower made it clear in a statement published this morning that these landings are designed to protect the safety of 2,500 United States citizens in Lebanon and at the urgent request of President Chamoun to assist the Lebanese government to stabilize the situation and preserve Lebanon's independence and integrity.

President Eisenhower has emphasized that the United States government cannot—and I quote from his statement—"stand idly by when Lebanon appeals itself for evidence of our concern and when Lebanon may not be able to preserve internal order and to defend itself against indirect aggression". The United States has stressed that the action being taken is "in conformity with the spirit" of the United Nations charter, that the troops being landed are not a fighting force, and that the landing is not an "act of war".