

# Free Traders Hit Back - *And WIN!*

## WINTER MOTORING SAFEGUARDED

**B**BRITISH motorists owe the Free Trade Union a debt of gratitude. The I.C.I., Shell Chemical Co. and Union Carbide, in unholy alliance against winter road users, requested the Government to impose an anti-dumping duty on American ethanediol, the chemical from which anti-freeze is made. In April the Free Trade Union submitted a closely reasoned, detailed case to the Board of Trade opposing the application. The Board has recently announced that there is no case for imposing the anti-dumping duty; David has defeated three Goliaths! This is a great victory for free traders.

In its representations the F.T.U. pointed out that if a duty had been imposed, the price of anti-freeze would have been maintained if not increased to private and commercial vehicle users. The Union also pointed out that there was already a duty of 33½ per cent. on ethanediol and that the chemical came into Britain at the same price from Germany as from the U.S.A. and duty free from Canada. It appeared that the duty had been applied for at the instigation of one American company which was setting up plant in Britain to put out its rivals in the U.S.A. Why should British consumers and traders be made to suffer in the trade wars of American combines, the Free Trade Union asked.

Motorists will hope that the Union's earlier application for the removal of the protectionist duty on imported rubber tyres will be equally successful. It would save road users, including cyclists, about £27½ million a year, and cut farmers' tyre bills by more than £1 million. The "cost to the Exchequer" would be negligible for the tariff duty is so high that very few tyres are imported.

## Dearer Furnishings?

### FREE TRADE UNION SAYS "NO!"

**T**HE young married couple who somehow contrive to find a flat or house—mortgaging themselves to the hilt and praying that they will remain childless—will have to pay £6 15s. more for a £31 three piece suite, and proportionate increases on many other furnishings *IF* a vested interest, already heavily protected, has its way.

With specious argument, the Furnishing Fabrics Manufacturers Association, Ltd. and the Moquette Weavers Association have asked for the duty on imported moquettes to be raised from 17½ per cent. to 22½ per cent. ad valorem or 3s. 9d. per square yard, whichever is the greater.

The Free Trade Union has picked up the gauntlet and is throwing all its resources into defeating the application. Prophecy is risky but we predict the application will be rejected, adding another leaf to the union's laurel crown, so convincing are the detailed representations it has submitted to the Board of Trade.

Our friends are taking no chances. On September 14 at a press reception and conference in London, they launched a large scale campaign against the application. A special committee comprising free traders, manufacturers and retail furnishers had already been formed, and a campaign fund, handsomely supported, was established.

Point by point the applicants' case was answered at the press conference. Some were: (1) that imports, especially Belgian, had had a "disastrous effect" on the home industry, (2) that Belgian weavers used subsidised Congo cotton and thereby enjoyed an unfair advantage, (3) that "unfair" Belgian competition had damaged continental weavers as well, (4) that Belgian moquettes are produced largely by a cottage industry relying on family labour working in unacceptable conditions, (5) that given additional protection, British weavers could increase their production by 175 per cent.

The F.T.U. pointed out, *inter alia*, the adverse effects a duty increase would have on the cost of living, employment in the furniture trade, trade relations with Belgium, and the moquette weavers themselves, who would lose their overseas markets if Belgians could no longer sell to Britain.

It will be interesting to see whether the protectionist Labour Party, so concerned about rents, will fight the application to make furnishings dearer.

## JUNKETING IN GENEVA

**I**N GENEVA on September 1 delegates from 44 countries started to play "Lets all turn when father turns". This will go on for ten months under the auspices of G.A.T.T. (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) at considerable expense to taxpayers in their respective countries. Their worthy object is to reduce tariff duties and to increase world trade. Their technique is to haggle in groups item by item, each offering to reduce (or even remove) the import tax their harried fellow countrymen have to pay if other governments will undertake similarly to treat their citizens less harshly. It really is the most foolish spectacle imaginable, and quite the wrong way of tackling the problem. Imagine solemnly promising not to wound yourself — or, anyway, not seriously — if others will promise to desist from self mutilation. While remaining unrepentant unilateralists, we wish the delegates every success — and good living.