

Mr. BUSH. These EEC countries for the most part, with the possible exception of Holland, and that is only recent, don't produce natural gas in any quantity, do they?

Mr. CHRISTOPHER. You are correct on this. In 1972 the situation will be somewhat different but also, as of today, and our brief so states, the United States does have in general a competitive cost advantage in the large-volume thermoplastic materials to which you refer. We anticipate and develop in more detail in our brief that by 1972 because of two factors operating, the shift from the coal base in Europe to oil and gas as a basis for raw materials, and the increasing scale of production and equivalent technology, that this advantage will no longer be enjoyed by our producers.

Mr. BUSH. Your fear is largely for the future.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER. In that classification. In the condensation polymers the European producers have an advantage right today.

Mr. BUSH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BURKE. We wish to thank both of you, Mr. Christopher and Mr. Richman, for your excellent testimony and your charts and slides. They were very informative.

(The following statement was received, for the record, by the committee:)

STATEMENT OF JULIUS SIMON, PRESIDENT, OPTICAL IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES, INC.

The Optical Importers Association of the United States, Inc. (O.I.A.), submits the following statement in lieu of a personal appearance before this Committee for incorporation in the record of hearings on tariff and trade proposals. The O.I.A. is a nonprofit corporation registered under the laws of the State of New York. It is a self-sustaining organization and is not affiliated with any foreign interests. Its membership is composed of 26 firms, located throughout the United States, who import eyeglass frames and mountings from abroad. In terms of percentage of imports, O.I.A. members account for approximately 85% of all eyeglass frames annually imported into the United States and in excess of 90% of imports of such merchandise from France, Italy and West Germany, the major exporting countries of eyeglass frames to the United States.

As American businessmen, the members of the O.I.A. strongly favor continuance of a reciprocal trade policy between the United States and other free countries of the world. We, therefore, support the Trade Expansion Act of 1968 and urge its passage. Experience and history have proven that exchange of products and know-how between the United States and its trading partners is of mutual benefit, and that unnecessary restrictions on such trade serve no useful purpose and invite only retaliation. For this reason, the O.I.A. opposes all tariff and non-tariff barriers not in the base economic interest of the United States and its citizens.

An example of the type of non-tariff barrier inimical to the interests of the United States is H.R. 16906. This bill would prohibit the manufacture for sale, sale in interstate commerce and the importation into the United States for sale of any eyeglass frame made of cellulose nitrate. On its face, H.R. 16906 does not appear to discriminate against imported eyeglass frames. The fact of the matter is, however, that nitrate is no longer used in the United States in the manufacture of plastic eyeglass frames, and, with the exception of some possible remaining inventory of American-made frames, the only source for nitrate frames is imports. Therefore, H.R. 16906 is aimed directly at imports and is an attempt to place an absolute embargo on the importation of a large percentage of the plastic eyeglass frames currently being imported into this country.

Cellulose nitrate has been used throughout the world in the manufacture of eyeglass frames for close to ninety years. In the United States, nitrate was used until approximately 1958, when frame manufacturers began using acetate. This switch in basic raw material was not one of preference but was as a result of a shortage of nitrate material in this country and the announced intention