

*Tariff Board*

out any possible reply. As long as the government is in power, it remains within its ability to continue or to change the commissioners of the board; but surely when a new government is elected as a result of public opinion—and it may be returned to power on the very questions connected with the fiscal policy—it is highly desirable that the new government should not be hampered in its work by a commission established by the preceding administration and it should be at liberty to create a tariff board in sympathy with its views. For that reason I shall vote for the amendment.

Mr. NEILL: When the substance of the amendment at present under discussion was before the house on the second reading of the bill, I voted against it and with the government because I thought that was not the proper stage to introduce it and, being very much of the opinion that we needed a tariff board, I considered that the amendment was not of such vital importance as to precipitate the defeat of the bill. But now that it is introduced in committee, in what I deem to be its proper place, I am more than willing to vote for it. I admit there is a good deal of logic behind the contention of the government that they have a mandate from the people to-day in the direction of high tariffs, but it is quite conceivable the day may come when that mandate will be withdrawn and I shall not willingly be a party to the initiation of a tariff board with its tenure of office so arranged as to perpetuate a system of high tariffs possibly long after the country has withdrawn its mandate in that direction and perhaps even, for stranger things have happened, after the party opposite has changed its policy in that regard.

I have just one other word to say regarding the personnel of the commission. I have heard a great deal about some features of it, such as what salaries they are to receive, and a hint has been given as to their geographical selection; but I have heard but little as to what the qualifications of these men will be. I should like to take this opportunity of placing before the committee a short resolution sent to me by one of the locals of British Columbia farmers. Although this is only a small local, it voices, I believe, the general wishes of the farmers in the district I represent and, I have good reason to think, in other parts of Canada as well. This is the resolution, endorsed by local No. 35, Wellington

[Mr. Rinfret.]

United Farmers of Canada, British Columbia section:

Whereas, the various branches of farming combined constitute one of the largest industries in the province of British Columbia—

And I should say of Canada also.

—and whereas, the different branches of agriculture have suffered to some considerable extent through inadequate tariffs and trade treaties, which place the producers of farm products in Canada and particularly in British Columbia in a market flooded with imported produce,

And whereas, the agricultural industry was not taken into consideration when negotiations were being carried on with regard to the lowering of tariffs and trade agreements with New Zealand—

I might also add Australia.

—therefore be it resolved, that this organization petition that there may be proper representation of the agricultural interests on any future boards created for the purpose of imposing tariffs, taxes, or formation of trade treaties.

That, of course, is not worded exactly to meet the present situation, but the suggestion is one which I would commend to the Prime Minister, namely, that at least one of the men on this board should have a thorough, practical knowledge of farming, not of one particular branch only but of as many of the different branches as possible. A good, all-around, practical farmer can be obtained and his services should be enlisted as one member of the board, especially when agriculture is such a large interest in Canada and is so vitally interested in the tariff.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I have already, on the motion for the second reading, expressed my views on this bill and especially on the subject matter of this amendment, and I do not intend to repeat them. I have not been surprised to hear the Prime Minister every time he has spoken since the bill has been before the house and the committee, exemplify the tariff board of the United States as an illustration of the good work which such a body can achieve. My right hon. friend had to go to Washington for a model for his policy. He could not go to Britain because the policy he is trying to create, the machinery for organizing and carrying out, is truly one in which our neighbours to the south have excelled in recent years. The United States has been the Mecca of high protection; Washington is the capital city of protectionism, and it is no wonder that my right hon. friend has to go there for a model for the machinery to carry out his policy in this country. But the right hon. gentleman is going further than