

information on tariff matters, and to help the government in framing its tariff policy. I regret very much that my right hon. friend should have chosen to abolish that tariff board, but I regret even more that having abolished it, the Prime Minister went ahead as if all the time he was being supplied with adequate information upon which to base the changes in the tariff which he proposed at the special session. True, and this is very interesting, I must give the Prime Minister credit for having tried in a certain way to revive some kind of a tariff commission by having certain members of the cabinet sit in a ring to gather information from the general public on particular tariff matters. May I be permitted to put on record an account of the way in which that committee of cabinet ministers proceeded in a certain instance, as it shows the intense desire they evinced to gather information on fiscal matters?

I was in Ottawa on the 16th of February, and this report of that first tariff meeting of cabinet ministers is dated Ottawa, February 17. I am quoting from a report in the *Montreal Gazette*. A tariff meeting of that special committee of cabinet ministers on fiscal matters had been scheduled for February 16, but there was some misunderstanding as to the time the committee should sit. Certain people thought the hour was 10 o'clock, and others thought it was 11. What happened? The Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir), I believe, proceeded to some room in the House of Commons, and sat there for about one minute, and when they found that nobody had arrived, they decided to adjourn the meeting *sine die*; and that concluded the hearing so far as that meeting was concerned. If that is an example, Mr. Speaker, of the high-handed discipline that my right hon. friend wants to institute in the public affairs of this country, it may perhaps be somewhat commended; but as an example of gathering information on fiscal matters, it certainly was not very encouraging. But there is more. When the Prime Minister adjourned that meeting, even his own ministers had not arrived. Perhaps hon. gentlemen will not believe that. Let me quote from the *Montreal Gazette*. It says:

Ministers who arrived too late for the sitting were: Hon. T. G. Murphy, Minister of the Interior, Hon. Alfred Duranleau, Minister of Marine, and Hon. Arthur Sauve, Postmaster General. Even officials of the National Revenue department, including Robert W. Breadner, commissioner of customs, were uncertain as to the hour of opening and came on the assumption that the hearing would commence at eleven o'clock.

And the meeting was adjourned, Mr. Speaker, at exactly 10.31, by the Prime Minister of Canada. If you admit at all the principle of cabinet solidarity, you must come to the conclusion that the Prime Minister adjourned the meeting before he had actually arrived as a government. The eminent economist who now presides over the destinies of this country is willing to establish contacts with the common people and gather information upon which to base his fiscal policy. No wonder he made such a terrible blunder when he dealt with the glass items in the schedules. I am not sure I will have time to go fully into that matter but may I say briefly that the increases in the glass items were something tremendous. We were importing glass from Belgium bearing an *ad valorem* duty of 12½ per cent. After securing certain information this government decided that the importation of glass should be stopped and it placed thereon a duty of so much per pound. I learned from people in Montreal who were interested in the glass business that a duty of 26 cents on an article valued at \$2.30, or about 12½ per cent, would have amounted to something like \$3, \$3.50 or \$4 under the revised schedule. The Prime Minister stated that from the information gathered from all corners of Canada, in his opinion, the price did not matter because we in Canada were going to produce glass. His view was that it did not matter what the duty would be because no more glass would have to be imported. I take as an example the position of one of the hon. members of this house, Mr. Bell (Hamilton), who stated that the measure would protect the industry in his constituency. The language used by the hon. gentleman was similar to that we heard throughout the session. He said he had investigated the position with extreme care and in his opinion within ten days from the time he was speaking there would be an increase from 150 to 500 in the number of men working in a certain plant.

Mr. VENIOT: He is still looking for the plant.

Mr. RINFRET: What was the result? The price of glass increased immediately and tremendously. Not only did it increase on the imported product but also on glass which had been stored throughout the country. The increase was of such an extreme nature that my hon. friend, the genial Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Ryckman), at once made use of his discretionary powers and inserted in that wonderful schedule the necessary corrective measure. He did away with that item. There was no more question of opening a plant and employing so many