

advise the government. It is true that it will gather facts, but there is a possibility that a conflict of opinion would be created which would be most regrettable. We take the stand that the framing of a tariff is not a judicial matter; that it is a matter of policy, a matter of responsibility. The government may use such a board to gather information and submit facts, but no government would desire to be hampered in its work of framing a tariff by a judicial board hearing evidence and coming to conclusions upon fiscal matters which might be in direct opposition to the views held by the government itself.

The Prime Minister has made many eloquent speeches, all exceedingly moderate in tone, in an effort to impress this house with the fact that he had no motives at all in this matter and that his only desire—a very sincere one, I believe—is to constitute a board which will be above any suspicion. May I say that his bill has not created a similar impression upon the public mind and upon the press generally. When we reached eleven o'clock last night I was just alluding to an editorial which appeared in the Montreal Star of June 29, which editorial dealt with the two tariff boards. The Star says that the issue is clear as crystal. I do not intend to read the entire editorial as probably hon. members have read it already, but I intend to allude to a part of it which impressed me very much and which no doubt will impress the committee. The Star takes the attitude that the tariff board which my hon. friend wants to constitute and the one which was constituted under the former government are very different in character. The Star states that the functions of the new board will be to obtain information from the chiefs of industry, from the experts on production, and from all those men who are connected with production. It charges the late board with intentions altogether different. Let me read what this Conservative paper says about the late tariff board. The editorial reads:

The job of the late tariff board was to study the industrial situation, listen to the evidence of experts, hear the opinions of miscellaneous people such as theorists, students and consumers.

This editorial tries to create the impression that the late board paid too much attention to theorists and faddists such as consumers, who are infected with the dangerous disease of not desiring to pay more for any article than it is worth.

Mr. MANION: They were probably thinking of the Consumers League.

Mr. RINFRET: It does not say that; even if it did, I do not think that would

change the aspect very much. The issue is as clear as crystal and as pure as water in the mind of this Conservative organ. The board to be constituted by my right hon. friend will listen to the producers, the manufacturers, the chiefs of industry and those who know all about it, while the late board had the weakness to listen to that class of faddists known as consumers, who came here with the little means at their disposal to try to demonstrate that there are two sides to the tariff question, and that perhaps their side might be worthy of consideration. Perhaps my right hon. friend has not paid much attention to that side of the question. Perhaps if this board works in the way it is understood by some of the Conservative organs in this country, he will be quite satisfied. But it is not without a certain degree of pride that I read this commentary which is supposed to be very offensive to us but which, on the contrary, is to my mind highly commendatory, that if not before the new board, at least before the old board, the common people could appear and present their case.

The Prime Minister has mentioned the Board of Railway Commissioners, and has tried to establish a parallel between this tariff board and the railway board. There is this difference, which I consider essential, between the two: we are not making railway rates. That power has been taken away from parliament. It is, on the contrary, highly desirable—and I think both parties are in agreement in that regard—that the rates of the railways be determined, not by a vote of the house, but by the decisions of the railway board, and so far as we are agreed on that, it is satisfactory that we have a railway board such as is constituted. But as regards the tariff we take the position—and I am not sure whether the Prime Minister does not take another position—that the tariff must remain within the responsibility of the government and that we should not by any means establish a board that will render final decisions, even if they may be only as to the grouping of facts, which will have such an impression on public opinion or on parliament that it might prevent the house from making a proper decision on fiscal matters. It is for that reason that I shall support the amendment.

I think the leader of the opposition yesterday made a most dispassionate and moderate appeal to the Prime Minister to amend at least this section of the bill and to consider carefully the amendment that we have moved. I am quite sure that the point made by the leader of the opposition is practically with-