

Customs tariff—529a. Lace embroideries wholly of cotton, not coloured, imported by manufacturers for use exclusively in the manufacture of clothing in their own factories: British preferential tariff,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; intermediate tariff,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; general tariff, 20 per cent.

Mr. BENNETT: The specific duty on all these items was reduced 25 per cent, I think, in 1935. I am not sure whether cottons were reduced 25 per cent or  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent, but there was a reduction on them, and that was pending receipt of the report from the tariff board.

Mr. DUNNING: They were reduced by one-third.

Mr. BENNETT: Pending receipt of report from the board, and the board took that fact into consideration, I fancy, when they recommended that the balance of the specific duty imposed against British goods be removed entirely. I have not had time to read the report of the board, because it only came in, as the minister remembers, about the time the budget was delivered.

Mr. DUNNING: I received it only a very short time before.

Mr. BENNETT: In the language of one of the hon. gentleman's predecessors, the two seemed to synchronize.

Mr. DUNNING: Perhaps I might be permitted to mention one point that arises there; my right hon. friend could possibly help me. The law respecting the tariff board requires the minister to lay on the table of the house, within, I think, fifteen days after receiving it, any report from the tariff board. I do not know what was the experience of my right hon. friend or of his finance minister, but there are many occasions, it seems to me, upon which it would be quite undesirable to lay such a report on the table of the house until the action of the government with respect to the report was made known to the house in the form of the budget itself. I can well imagine circumstances of very grave embarrassment, particularly with respect to hearings respecting the rights of other nations under treaties and things of that sort, if this requirement has to be rigidly observed. I do not say that it was a great embarrassment at this time—

Mr. BENNETT: I should think not.

Mr. DUNNING: I should prefer to have had some of these reports available to myself earlier than they were available, but I was by law compelled, in advance of the budget, to lay the reports on the table of the house within fifteen days after receiving them. I

doubt very much the general advisability of that provision. I know, of course, it is desirable and the law intends that the information shall be made available to the house upon its receipt from the board.

Mr. BENNETT: The real reason of it, as I think my hon. friend will see if he reads the debates of that time, was that it was believed, especially by those who then sat to the left of the Speaker, to be highly desirable that the public should have all the information possible with respect to these matters.

Mr. DUNNING: I agree entirely.

Mr. BENNETT: And that the judgment of the board should be treated as a judgment of the court and should be known, as far as that might be possible, by everybody at the earliest possible moment. There is no provision in the Tariff Board Act, as I recall it, and I speak subject to correction, for the publication of the report if the house is not in session. There might, of course, be publication from the knowledge of the parties to the controversy that the court had thus decided their case, but so far as the minister is concerned the provision with respect to laying on the table within fifteen days applies only when the house is in session. The argument that was then used I found it difficult to answer, and I find it difficult to answer now. The argument, as I recall it, was this: that the report of the board should be laid on the table of the house as soon as possible after the opening of parliament in order that the house may be seized of all the circumstances connected with the adjudication. But the public has known it ever since the judgment was given, just as the public knows the result of, let us say, an appeal to the privy council. In that case it knows it on the morning the committee delivers its judgment, but the formal judgment, which is that of the king in council, does not come until after the report has been made by the judicial committee to the king, and has been approved by the king in council. What happens when a judgment of the tariff board is delivered, and the board suits its own convenience as to the study it gives to the matter, is that it then becomes a matter of public knowledge.

Mr. DUNNING: Not under part I.

Mr. BENNETT: That refers to applications to the board initiated by the minister, but I am talking about cases where, as in this case, the parties made application to the