

Tariff Board

DUTY ON MAGAZINES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. E. J. YOUNG (Weyburn): May I ask the Prime Minister when we can expect to have laid on the table the briefs and representations made by the publishers to the government on tariff matters.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): There were two briefs, one last fall and one this year. Part of the submission was confidential—the question of cost—as I advised the hon. gentleman. The rest of it, I fancy, can be brought down at any time. I had forgotten entirely about it.

INCOME WAR TAX ACT AMENDMENT

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister) moved the third reading of Bill No. 109, to amend the Income War Tax Act.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

TARIFF BOARD

PROVISION FOR APPOINTMENT, POWERS, DUTIES AND SALARIES

The house resumed from Monday, July 6, consideration in committee of Bill No. 47, to provide for the appointment of a tariff board.—Mr. Bennett—Mr. Hanson (York-Sunbury) in the chair.

On section 3.—Constitution of board.

Mr. RINFRET: Mr. Chairman, when this section was being discussed last night, along with the amendment moved by the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard (Mr. Hanbury), I was endeavouring to demonstrate a few points in connection with the attitudes taken in this matter by the government and by the opposition. I wish to refer again to the very remarkable and convincing presentation of the case made last night by the hon. member for Hants-Kings (Mr. Ilsley). The hon. member showed very conclusively that in a matter of this kind it cannot be merely the question of recording facts in a mathematical fashion and he gave a number of examples taken from the work of the tariff commission in the United States. That body is composed of six members, three Republicans and three Democrats and the hon. member showed conclusively that on many occasions these commissioners differed as to the appreciation of the facts submitted to them. Following that remarkable speech by my colleague, and the examples he gave to the committee, I urge that it cannot be argued

[Mr. Bennett.]

with any degree of conviction that the tariff board, now suggested to be set up by the Prime Minister will be merely a fact recording body. They will give more importance to some facts than to others; they will group those facts in accordance with their own conception of what the tariff policy should be, and in that grouping they will arrive at a conclusion which will naturally follow the working of their minds in the matter of tariff evidence. I do not think that there can be the least doubt about that. The Prime Minister says that you can have mathematical precision in the finding of facts, but I think he is contradicted by the very board to which he has drawn attention, that is, the tariff board of the United States. The hon. member for Hants-Kings has shown that every individual commissioner will bring his own conception of the fiscal policy to bear upon his appreciation of the evidence brought before him, and there can be no mathematical precision unless my right hon. friend is to argue that division is an integral part of mathematics.

I would refer to another matter which although not directly related to this bill, refers to the general matters which are now before the committee. The Prime Minister has urged that it is essential to have a tariff board to present conclusions or facts about the tariff before any changes are made. That statement is a direct condemnation of the attitude taken by himself and his government when they submitted last fall some four hundred changes in the tariff, all in the same direction, while two hundred additional changes are to be made during the present session. If we were to take the Prime Minister at his word, and agree to the passage of this bill, it would mean that we could ask him, with a great degree of logic, that he withdraw the resolutions concerning changes in the tariff until his own commission has considered those changes. Then, after this commission had passed upon the very items he is submitting at this session, they could be considered next year by the house.

The point upon which we differ is in connection with the character of this tariff board. The Prime Minister says that it must be judicial in character, and that therefore it is necessary to have an extended tenure of office. The Prime Minister states that a tariff board of this kind may well serve under one government or another because its work will be to find facts and submit them for the consideration of the government. We take a different attitude; we believe that this board will