

ing such matters; because since we have had parliamentary institutions it has always been recognized that where there are details which must be considered a general statement in a statute is not sufficient. Anyone interested in that, as is my hon. friend from Hants-Kings, will find the statement dealt with in a book dealing with the drafting of parliamentary statutes. Although I am not certain I think the book was written by the late Lord Thring, the man who drafted the British North America Act.

In the present instance we have details following a declaration of general principle, and then we find the instructions to the board to consider:

All conditions and factors which affect or enter into the cost of production and the price to the consumers in Canada.

What made the costs to you as consumers in Canada? Be it clothes, be it wool, be it boots and shoes, be it neckties or be it food—what were the factors and conditions which entered into the cost to you as consumers? That is the general condition provided for in the bill in addition to the specific ones. Then follows subsection (2), to which attention has been drawn. I shall read it:

The board shall make inquiry into any other matter, upon which the minister desires information. . . .

Certainly. As my right hon. friend has said, the minister has power to ask for information concerning "any other matters" in connection with which he desires information. However, the clause does not stop there. It continues:

. . . in relation to any goods which, if brought into Canada or produced in Canada, are subject to or exempt from duties of customs or excise,

That is, we are dealing with a class of goods exempt from customs or excise—

. . . . and shall report to the minister, and the inquiry into any such matter may include inquiry as to the effect which an increase or decrease of the existing rate of duty upon a given commodity might have upon industry or trade, and the extent to which the consumer is protected from exploitation.

Those are the words to which I direct attention. Name any legislation the Liberal party ever offered the people of Canada which endeavoured to do what the present legislation provides. Name one thing that they ever did. When I hear the ex-Minister of Agriculture indulging in his coarse jokes I ask him: What did he ever do to protect the consumer of Canada? Name me one thing he ever did—anything—to protect Canadian consumers.

When I hear the hon. member from Weyburn (Mr. Young) from day to day indulging in his tirades I say to him: Are you serious? Are you sincere? Do you mean what you say? If you do, then, why do you not join with the government which is endeavouring to pass legislation to prevent the consumer from being exploited? That is the position I take in respect to this matter.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: Because it is a humbug—the whole thing.

Mr. BENNETT: That is exactly what I expected my hon. friend would say. He is incapable of sincerity in connection with any matter, and he cannot conceive of anything being done which would not be humbug, because that is his stock in trade. Through all these years that has been his stock in trade.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: What about the London conference?

Mr. BENNETT: That is what I thought my hon. friend would ask.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: They were not long getting on to the right hon. gentleman over there.

Mr. BENNETT: All I can say to hon. gentlemen opposite is this: When legislation is offered to this committee in terms unambiguous, unequivocal, in conformity with every rule of governing the construction and interpretation of a statute, which is open to one meaning and one only, then I say there is something wrong with the minds of those who read into such a measure a sinister purpose. I say in all positiveness that there never has been legislation to which more time and thought has been given for the purpose of helping the ordinary consumer in Canada than that which lies before this committee to-day.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: There is not much to it.

Mr. BENNETT: There must always be some body to ascertain facts.

When the hon. member for Weyburn took his seat this afternoon he answered, I trust for all time, the right hon. the leader of the opposition. He stated the truth. This is not fiscal legislation; this does not make tariffs; this body has no legislative power and no parliamentary functions, but it is a body which shall report to the government of the day in answer to inquiries made by that government. That government in turn may pass or fail to pass legislation as in its discretion is thought desirable. Under our constitution, with which at least some hon. members oppo-