

*Customs Tariff*

from a tariff board appointed by the late government the very material which justifies that particular argument.

It is neither pleasant nor easy for me to take the position I am taking to-night. Like the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Ross), I voted for the budget, but when I find in a supplementary item of the tariff such a departure from the convictions I hold with regard to trade, I must necessarily say so in this house and give my reasons. I do not propose to use, in proving my case, any arguments of my own; I am going to take the arguments submitted by the tariff board.

Mr. DUNNING: Will my hon. friend permit me to interrupt for a moment? When he speaks of a supplementary item, I trust he does not thereby imply any intention on the part of the government to deceive. I indicated in the budget very definitely that certain reports from the tariff board were expected and that I hoped to be able to deal with such reports while the house was in committee of ways and means. I am sure my hon. friend did not intend any such implication.

Mr. GLEN: The very opposite. I do not intend to imply anything or to indulge in any cavilling as far as the government is concerned. My only wish is that this matter could have been brought before the house at a time when we would have had more time to discuss it and when more hon. members could have taken part.

Mr. DUNNING: The report was laid on the table a few days after I received it.

Mr. GLEN: Quite so. But a matter such as this vitally affects the convictions of many in this house who, while they may not be free-traders, are low tariff men. We are now faced with a direct issue raised by the tariff board, an issue which we, holding the views we do, cannot avoid. In the argument I am submitting I intend to deal with this fact, that here is an industry which has been in existence for sixty years, and which therefore, as the hon. member for Moose Jaw has said, cannot be called an infant industry; and if during that period they have not so far put their own business in order so that they can be regarded as an economic unit in the industrial life of Canada, surely there is something wrong with that business. When one finds it contended that upon a reduction of the tariff there is a considerable influx of furniture from the United States in competition with the Canadian industry when actually less than 3 per cent is the amount supplied from the United States for consumption in Canada, and the other 97 per cent of the Canadian

[Mr. Glen.]

market is controlled as against the world by the industry which is now established in our country, one can hardly credit that there should be any fear in the minds of those who now control so enormous a percentage of the home market. Then we find that the wages paid by the industry in Canada are less than those paid to the coon niggers in the factories of the south; so the old cry that the industry in Canada has to compete with the low-class and low-priced labour of the southern United States is disposed of by the very report of the tariff board itself.

Having disposed of that, the question arises, what about the industry so far as Canada is concerned? Is it an industry that we should recompense and protect against its own inefficiency? If so, it means that so far as we the people of Canada are concerned, by this increase in the amount of the protection afforded to the industry, the government is asking us to bonus the industry because of its own inefficiency; and when the tariff board suggests a temporary period of two years during which the industry shall have time to put its house in order, the plain fact is that the Canadian people will have to pay an increased price for the keeping of that industry during that time.

I do not think that the government of the day should have accepted the report and conclusions of the tariff board. Realizing, as the government must do, the convictions of so many of us, they must know that it would create disillusionment and discontent within the ranks. I will not believe that the government are willing to accept all the recommendations of the tariff board, nor do I think the government is bound to accept them. In view of all that is happening I trust that they will not feel themselves pledged to adopt those recommendations.

Mr. DUNNING: We do not. I want to make that immediately clear to my hon. friend. The government does not feel itself bound, nor is there anything in the law which binds them to accept the report. The government spent days upon the consideration of this particular report before deciding, as a government, to recommend it to the house. The government is entirely a free agent in adopting its policy, no matter what the tariff board may say.

Mr. GLEN: I am very glad that the Minister of Finance makes that statement.

Mr. BENNETT: He has threshed that out in great detail.

Mr. GLEN: The government of this country is not bound by anything that the tariff board may recommend; they have the power