

of Canada are to be changed by the Minister of Finance and his government without a tittle of information except what they may have gained behind closed doors. I will admit there was a hearing where representations might be made, and as a spectator I took occasion to attend. Not one word of information was forthcoming however as to what was to be done. We were informed that briefs were filed, and action was to be taken upon those briefs. So far as the public were concerned however until the day the right hon. Minister of Finance brought down his budget certainly no hon. member on this side of the house and probably very few on that side knew what the changes would be. I say if the government is willing to take the responsibility for making these drastic changes, which in many instances mean complete exclusion of particular articles so far as trade is concerned, all I have to say is that from the point of view of the government there does not appear to be any necessity for a tariff board. I am not going to offer any complaint on that score; theirs is the responsibility. They said they would assume that responsibility; the people accepted their offer and placed them in power, and they are now in a position where they are responsible for the changes the bill now before us would involve.

Having voiced my opinion I now claim exactly the same measure of responsibility for the party to which I belong. I do not represent a high tariff party, but rather the opposite. If the party which I support are fortunate enough to succeed in the next election I do not wish to be handicapped by being advised by a group of gentlemen who were selected because on a question of national importance they were diametrically opposed to my views. I think I heard one of my hon. friends say that there is no chance. All I have to say to him is that he has not been travelling in recent weeks.

My objections to the bill now before us are twofold. First, the suggested term of ten years is an imposition upon any government which might follow the present one. I make this statement because with respect to the board which has been dismissed, I stand firmly behind the action of the present Prime Minister. Moreover may I add that I do not see the slightest necessity for establishing a tariff board by legislative action. After all the government must take responsibility in choosing advisers, and I wonder why they want by statute to fasten for ten years upon the parliament of Canada gentlemen who hold their point of view. My hon. friend the

Minister of Railways and Canals, and indeed the Minister of Finance himself, made the statement the other day that the tariff board would be no different from the Board of Railway Commissioners. I think that was an absurd statement to make, the worst kind of absurdity.

Mr. MANION: I did not make any such statement.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I so understood my hon. friend.

Mr. MANION: No; I merely said it was appointed for ten years.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): There is no similarity between the Board of Railway Commissioners and the proposed tariff board. The board of Railway Commissioners are appointed for the purpose of adjudicating upon railway rates, and there is nothing of a political nature in connection with it.

Mr. CAHAN: There is nothing political about railway rates?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Not so far as I know. If my hon. friend has any information on the point I should like to have it. My understanding is that the duties of the Board of Railway Commissioners are purely and simply to adjudicate upon rates. I do not view the Board of Railway Commissioners in the same light as I would view the tariff board at all. As for making comparison with the appointment of judges, may I say that I have known some judges who were at one time my political opponents, and yet they have made some of the best judges who have been placed upon the bench. I am frank enough to say that I have never been able to discover that they were in the slightest degree biased, even in political matters. But the matter now before us is of an entirely different nature. No doubt we will have to stand for the setting up of the proposed board by statute, I most emphatically resent the fastening of a board of this character upon future parliaments. May I repeat however that I see no necessity for a statute. I take it that the board is bound to be political in character. If the people of Canada decide that they wish to have a high tariff government, they have a right to their decision and we must be prepared to accept the high tariff policy. If, on the other hand the people of Canada decide the opposite, then they should not be advised by a board such as the one proposed, and when that occasion arose the proper thing to do would be to discharge that board at once and appoint one in keeping with the viewpoint of