

cannot obtain competent men to devote themselves to this work when they do not know that they will be retained in office for a definite or extended period of time. Perhaps there is something in that argument, but on reflection I do not think it conclusive. Members of this house, and members of this government, who do not receive greater remuneration than is to be paid to members of this proposed board, willingly undertake their duties when they know they are not certain at all of retaining office for a period of probably more than four years. I am quite sure members of the house, to say nothing of members of this government or of former governments, will not allow their modesty to prevent them saying that they are at least men of as great ability as we may expect the members of this newly created tariff board to be. I believe it would be possible to obtain men who are thoroughly competent and who are imbued with sufficient public spirit to serve on the board and do good work even though they have no certainty of ten years of office.

There is no absolute certainty in regard to the fact-finding of this proposed board, and there being no certainty their prejudice would very naturally lead them to do the thing which the government desired them to do. If that be true, in what situation is a new government? I am not now talking of high tariff or low tariff, but if we have then a board in office which perhaps at times will exercise a bit of prejudice—because we may as well say what we think—in favour of the policies of the government which appointed them, then when a new government comes in why should it be obliged to retain in office men in whom it has no confidence and who would act contrary to its wishes? It is impossible for that newly elected government to disestablish the board, and its members cannot be discharged. True, the new government might bring in a bill to repeal this legislation and disestablish the board in that way. But then it would have to contend with an antagonistic Senate. If I may without disrespect say so of that august body, it is perhaps the greatest anomaly of parliamentary government in Canada that when a new government comes in it almost invariably from the necessity of the case finds the upper house of a different political stripe from the House of Commons which has just been elected by the people, and which is supposed to represent the wishes of the people.

I can see no harm in establishing a board whose members would hold office during pleasure. Those men would hold office at

least during the tenure of the present government—unless they were shown to be incompetent, and then I hardly know how the present government would get rid of them. I would say that it should not be the wish of the government, if unfortunately for themselves they failed to elect a majority to this house and were turned out of office, that their successors should be saddled with a board entirely out of sympathy with the wishes of the new government. I believe in the final analysis that if the Prime Minister and the government would give careful consideration to the question even now they might decide, except that it might be doing violence to their pride, that all their purposes would be gained by adopting the amendment as their own, assured that the board would do good work, assured that they could obtain good men, and assured also that they would be freed probably from the unjustifiable suspicion that they are playing politics in making appointments to this board.

Mr. BROWN: I have already spoken on this bill and my remarks will now be brief. I protest against what seems to me to be the worst fallacy I have ever heard of—that is, that this is a question of absolute mathematics. The Prime Minister seems to have admitted that there may be differences of opinion as to the relative costs of manufacturing in one country and another; but he does contend that once that difference has been admitted, or once a certain figure has been found to be a fact or a so-called fact, then the imposition of a certain duty is all that is necessary to establish equality. I protest most emphatically against that idea. The Prime Minister ought to know that when any tariffs are levied, when any restrictions are put on trade, there are a thousand and one unforeseen results that cannot be accurately estimated. In nothing is it more true than in the making of tariffs that:

The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley.

You may say that a certain percentage of duty will equalize costs, but there are many unforeseen factors entering into the problem which cannot be calculated mathematically. It seems to me a most absurd position to take, that this is a case of pure mathematics.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I have not taken up any time discussing any stage of this bill, either on the resolution, on the second reading or on any other occasion, and therefore I feel justified in prolonging the discussion somewhat, to put before the committee a