

*Tariff Board*

ten year period. He mentioned the other day that it was his intention to appoint to the board one member from the province of Quebec and one from the prairies, and I assume that the third will be from the province of Ontario. With respect to those three appointees, is he perfectly sure that for the period of the next ten years each one will perform his services so satisfactorily that the right hon. gentleman will have no occasion to regret having fixed the tenure of office definitely at ten years? If the members of the board perform their services satisfactorily there will be no question about their being continued in office: If their duties are discharged in an impartial way, as a fact finding board purely and simply, with no object beyond that of ascertaining facts, I, for one, do not see why the personnel would need to be changed even with a change of administration. There is everything to be said for having some body that will collect information, a body which will have continuous existence and be able to pass on from one year to another and from one government to its successor the benefit of accumulated experience. I believe that all this would be accomplished by members appointed at pleasure.

My right hon. friend is creating a suspicion with respect to his intentions, which would not arise if he made the tenure of office of the board at pleasure instead of for a period of ten years. The fact that he insists upon ten years, which is a period that far exceeds the life of a parliament, particularly after he himself has been so strong in asserting the principle that one parliament should not bind another—

Mr. BENNETT: That is, with respect to a money grant.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: —and now asserts that one government should be able to bind another government, causes me for one to feel that he must have in mind something further with respect to the purposes this board is intended to serve than merely that which he presents so plausibly, namely, the finding of facts with a view to assist the administration of the day. To put the matter fairly to my right hon. friend, may I say that we are prepared to admit his right, in connection with any board he may appoint, to select those who he believes are in accord with himself in the policy which he is seeking to enforce at the present time. That policy, I need not say, is a policy of protection in tariff matters. My right hon. friend's government is in office, among other things, to

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

introduce the protective element into the tariff where it does not now exist. I do not agree with the view expressed, even by one or two from this side of the house, that the right hon. gentleman and his government have had a mandate from the people to change the tariff of the country substantially. I do not believe that in the last general election any representations were made by hon. gentlemen opposite which led the country to believe that if the Conservative party were returned to power they would alter the tariff in a wholesale fashion both as to range and as to increases in the several items as they are doing at the present time. The public had every right to expect that if hon. gentlemen opposite were returned to power there would be a protectionist administration and that it would add to the protectionist features of the tariff in substantial particulars. But that they had any mandate to revise the tariff in a wholesale fashion upwards is something which I, for one, would not concede for a moment.

Let us assume that they are in office on the understanding, from their point of view, that they have a mandate from the people to maintain the protective feature in the tariff and to increase the tariff generally. Assuming that, I say that my right hon. friend would be most unwise, in making his selections for the tariff board, to choose the members of his board from among those who were known to favour free trade policies, or who stood for a tariff for revenue, or even to those who had been actively identified with the Liberal party's point of view with respect to matters of tariff policy. We do not expect him to make selections from our side. He is not doing in this what was done by the government of the United States when they introduced a tariff board for advisory purposes. They selected representatives of both political parties. This bill is modelled largely on the statute creating the United States tariff board. But one feature of that board is absent from the one here proposed, and that fact makes me stress the more emphatically that the appointments should be at pleasure rather than for a period of ten years. In the United States, as has been said, the Democratic party under a Republican government has named three members of the tariff board; and should the Democratic party come into office after the next presidential election there will remain on the tariff board three Republicans who have been appointed by the Republican administration. One can see evidence of a desire for fairness and justice in such an arrangement. But when that feature is disregarded