

be faced with this alternative, either to reject the suggested schedules and so repudiate the work of the body which it has appointed, or to accept them and become subsidiary in that respect to the creature of its own creation. Those are two of the difficulties which I see: the limited basis of inquiry, being limited to ascertaining relative costs, with the danger of encouraging inefficiency and lack of progress in our factories, and secondly, the inescapable difficulty in respect of the power of this body to indicate the necessary tariff schedules to meet the conditions which the board itself has outlined.

Now I come to the amendment. In order to discuss the amendment properly, I must briefly outline my own concept of the sort of tariff board that I would like to see functioning. It would be a purely scientific board, absolutely non-partisan, a board which would bring to the government and to parliament in the study of this important subject the facts of the case; not to suggest what schedules should be put into force, but to state precisely what rates of wages are paid in this and that factory, in this and another country, and what is the output of an hour's labour; to let us know beyond doubt or peradventure just what are the real costs of labour and of production, the real conditions with which labour and industry are surrounded in different sections of this country and in countries other than our own; to let us know without possibility of contradiction just what effect imports may have upon exports, and the relation between the two. In other words, it would inform us on all of those questions which go to form the fiscal problem of this country. It would be a body scientific and absolutely non-partisan, engaged in fact finding, and as a result of its labours there would be removed from the sphere of imagination so many of those subjects connected with our fiscal policy which have been discussed in this country for the last fifty years. That is my concept.

Now I approach the amendment from that point of view. Its weakness to my mind lies in this: Prior to moving his amendment the mover outlined the different weaknesses contained in the bill itself, pointing to all those weaknesses as reasons why the bill itself would be inoperative or operate only for evil. But the amendment itself does not seek to remove any one of those weaknesses. It does not seek to remove or modify any one of those evils. What it does seek is to make non-permanent not the provisions of the proposed legislation but the atmosphere which may surround the act, the mentality, the temperament, the point of view of the men whose duty it will be to admin-

[Mr. Speakman.]

ister it. That is what the amendment seeks. In seeking that it brings to my mind another evil, that in accepting the amendment we frankly state that as a matter of policy this shall not be a non-partisan, fact finding board, but that in its very essence it shall be a partisan board. When we say it must hold the confidence of the government under which it functions the only possible interpretation to be placed upon those words is the interpretation placed upon similar words as applied to our present high commissioner in London. A board which would share the political views, the views upon policies, the views upon fiscal matters which are held by the government of the day must be, to my mind at least, a partisan board.

Mr. ILSLEY: No. It may be a board of a character such as my hon. friend desires, in which event it will command the confidence of succeeding administrations.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: If the personnel of a board were of such a high character as to warrant the abiding confidence of the administration which appointed it or of later administrations, then the same might apply to the board at present under discussion. I have no objection to the term "shall hold office only during pleasure" except in one connection to which I shall refer presently. I do object however to the preamble or the statement leading up to the expression I have just quoted. My interpretation of the language of the amendment would be to this effect, "that this board shall be a partisan board"—in the sense that it reflects the fiscal views of the government of the day. The whole argument of the hon. member who moved the amendment, of the right hon. leader of the opposition and of all hon. members who have spoken in support of the amendment, tends to show that the board shall be in the nature of a body of confidential advisers holding the views of the government of the day. That, Mr. Speaker, is a concept of a board far removed from that which I hold. My greatest fear concerning the personnel of the proposed board is that it will be partisan. Appointed, as it will and must be, by the government, I am afraid the board will be partisan and that it will bring to the performance of its duties and its inquiries not the unimpassioned, non-partisan, unprejudiced views of the scientific observer but the partisan, biased views of the political board seeking to uphold a decision already determined upon. That is what I would be afraid of.

I am in this position: On the one hand I am faced with the possibility that a partisan