

Supply—Trade and Commerce

Mr. Charlton: Would the minister explain this contribution of \$6,300?

Mr. Howe: That is a payment for services. The office in Berne furnishes Canada with every change in tariff made by every country in the world, and we in turn provide that office with any change in our tariffs. The office in Berne pools information received from every country in the world and supplies consolidated information to every country which is a member of the organization.

Mr. Catherwood: Could the minister comment on the businessmen's committee which was set up under the leadership of Mr. Duncan and which I believe worked independently of the Department of Trade and Commerce although it was working along identical lines. Could he indicate just what was accomplished by that committee?

Mr. Howe: In the United Kingdom a dollar export board was formed, the purpose of which was to promote exports to dollar countries. At the request of the dollar export board a dollar-sterling board was formed in Canada under the chairmanship of Mr. Duncan and with a membership of distinguished Canadians, for the most part men in business. The purpose of that board was to work with the dollar board in the same direction, that is to promote exports from the United Kingdom to Canada. I think the Canadian board did a first-rate job.

Any difficulties faced by a Canadian wishing to import equipment or any other commodities from the United Kingdom could be cleared through the board. Delivery problems were cleared, information was obtained as to quality, and other service was rendered by this board to Canadian importers. That board did much to promote the import of British goods into Canada. My hon. friend will recall that some two or three years ago imports from Great Britain exceeded exports to Great Britain in value. In other words, the trade was about in balance at that time. As a result the board in Canada was disbanded and an advisory committee set up in its place. I believe within the last two or three months proposals have been made to revive the dollar-sterling board. Of course the government would be glad to see any step taken that will improve the balance of payments between Canada and Britain. The government had no direct relationship with the dollar-sterling board other than to make a contribution toward the expenses of the board. Part of the money for the support of the board was raised privately and part was contributed by the Department of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): What relationship has this division to our own tariff board?

[Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood).]

Mr. Howe: It has no relationship with the tariff board. This is the branch of the department concerned with external trade that negotiates trade agreements with other countries. It was the branch that looked after negotiations at Geneva, Annecy and Torquay. It furnished the experts on foreign trade for the Canadian government. These delegations are usually made up of representatives from external affairs and finance, and a man from the tariff board, and expert information on export trade is furnished by this group.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): When you go to Torquay or Geneva you have the tariff board, plus the other departments, plus these representatives from the Department of Trade and Commerce. Is it clear that there is no duplication of tariff work? I can realize that when a trade agreement is being made you must know what the tariff situation is, but we have what is supposed to be an expert tariff board. I certainly believe that it is. I come back to what the minister said in answer to my last question, that he does not consider it any part of his duty to see that there is no duplication.

Mr. Howe: I did not say that.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Are we sure that there is none here?

Mr. Howe: I wish my hon. friend would quote me accurately. I did not say that it was none of my business; I said that I did not know, which is quite different.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): But you know everything that is your business.

Mr. Howe: I would not go that far afield. The tariff board is concerned with domestic tariffs, tariffs of the Canadian government, and this division is concerned entirely with foreign tariffs. They are complementary to each other, but they do not overlap in any particular.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I thought of that one too, strangely enough. How can a tariff be domestic? Tariffs are two-sided things. We make tariffs here; other people make tariffs also, but surely we must study them both at the same time in order to get anywhere.

Mr. Howe: That is why they send experts from the tariff board and from the Department of Trade and Commerce. The tariff board knows all about Canadian tariffs and these men are supposed to know all about the tariffs of other countries and their effect on Canadian trade.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): The minister is not going to leave it at that and have us