

as compared with other countries. The board is empowered to make inquiry into any other matter upon which the minister desires information, in relation to any goods which if brought into Canada or produced in Canada are subject to or exempt from duties of customs or excise.

That is very clear; the purpose of the board is to act as a fact finding advisory commission. The right hon. leader of the government is to be congratulated by the parliament of Canada for bringing in legislation to constitute this board, and he will be congratulated also, I submit, by the people of Canada.

Hon. CHARLES STEWART (West Edmonton): I do not rise, Mr. Speaker, to object to the appointment of a tariff board. I believe that a tariff board acting in an advisory capacity can be very helpful to any government. I think there is no dispute about that. Nor do I intend to go into the provisions of the present bill in detail. That has been very well done already by the hon. member for Hants-Kings (Mr. Ilsley), and later this afternoon by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King). I do not intend to say very much in regard to the remarks of the hon. Minister of Railways (Mr. Manion) because I do not think that more than ten per cent of them were relevant to the question before the house. If we are going to have a tariff debate I am ready to take part in it any day, but no doubt many of these tariff matters will be discussed when the tariff resolutions are before us for consideration, and we shall then have an opportunity of expressing our views in that regard.

Mr. MANION: I brought in the tariff only because my hon. friends had referred to it, and I was replying to their arguments.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I am making no objections to the hon. gentleman's speech. I am simply stating that for the most part his remarks were irrelevant to the question before the house.

Having said that we all appear to be in favour of an advisory board on tariff and taxation, it then becomes a question of method. May I say that so far as I am concerned I find no fault with the leader of the government for abolishing the old tariff board, whether there was only one member then existent, or two, or how many there were. Clearly in my opinion that board, as political questions are discussed and party alignments are known in Canada, would have been of little or no service to the present government. Moreover the present government was elected on the specific promise to

[Mr. Manion.]

increase tariffs. They have a mandate to carry out their promise. I wish however to take issue with my hon. friend the Minister of Railways and Canals when he states that the party to which he belongs is speaking for the whole of the Canadian people. There is always an opposition, and when my hon. friend was over here he spoke in no uncertain terms when voicing his opinions on public matters. We ought to remember that the majority of hon. members who sit on that side of the house procured in the last election about 200,000 votes more than the Liberal party. In voting strength therefore they do not in such a large way represent the public opinion in Canada. It is our duty to represent what we believe and what as a party we espouse; it is our duty as an opposition to state our policy.

For the last forty years I can think of no issue which has held such an important place in Canadian politics as the tariff. It has been one of the vital questions upon which different parliaments have divided upon every occasion. A board to be set up for the purpose of advising upon tariff matters must of necessity, in my opinion, be a board who feel and think the same as the party in power. I can conceive of no other condition, and I find no fault with the action of the government in proposing to set up the board. I complain only of the method they are adopting.

To my mind there are some provisions in the bill now before the house which will cause the government considerable difficulty. I should like to direct the attention of hon. members to a provision in clause 4 of the bill in which it is pointed out that the board will advise on certain particulars respecting rates to be charged. I sincerely trust the government will see fit to delete that clause from the bill. To my mind no board has the right to dictate rates to the government of Canada, the body which alone is directly responsible to the people. A board may find facts and may bring the necessary information before the Minister of Finance; he in turn may discuss them with the members of the government, who may make up their minds, as to the necessary rates.

The complaint has been made that the late government did not have information before them. Where did the present government get the information whereby they have at this moment—or will have when the tariff items are passed by this house—amended over one-half the items of the whole tariff schedule? Where did they get that information? Moreover I will say that the most important items entering into the livelihood of the people