

Mr. BUREAU: I have not heard any discussion about it and I would not be in a position to answer my hon. friend.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: There is some correspondence between the federal and provincial governments on this proposal. If the board is appointed under this legislation, the chances are that we would wait until the board was appointed before holding a conference.

Mr. GOULD: Would the government obligate themselves to lay the report of this board before the House within fifteen days after the opening of parliament?

Mr. BUREAU: I will not obligate myself or the government to anything that is not in the bill or anywhere else. We do not know whether the board will make any report. They may make suggestions. They will have meetings with the Minister of Finance and his advisers, and the same as regards the Department of Customs. The resolution will be supplemented by legislation. If my hon. friends have anything to add to or to strike out of the bill, the proper time to do so will be when the bill is before the House. If they object to the principle of the resolution, all right; let us discuss it, and if they still object to it, let us take a vote and see whether the House wants it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I have not been able to hear all the discussion, and no doubt there is a difference of view as to the wisdom of appointing this new advisory board. I note the government has rather shifted its term from "commission" to "board." The "commission" term was played out; it got so common that the public were somewhat nauseated with it, so that the word "board" is now more appropriate. I see, also, that the word "advisory" is used instead of "tariff." I am not enthusiastic as to the whole proposal, but I think what the government really has in mind is a tariff commission. Remembering, however, as they do, how the whole party fought it tooth and nail in 1912, denouncing it as merely a method of making permanent the protective system—a bulwark of protection—to see that the big privileged interests were always privileged, always secure against attack—they decided to seek security in a new name, and they devised this scheme of "advisory board."

I believe thoroughly in having tariff decisions reached on a business basis. Until we are old and strong enough to do that, we are not going to have very much of a country. Until the United States learned their lesson, the Democratic party as well as the other,

[Mr. Hoey.]

and admitted in action as well as in speech the soundness of the protective principle there, they did not get very far. For many years they have framed their tariff upon this, taking the advice of experts, the best advice they could get, used their committees and put their tariff on what they believed to be a business basis.

The government intends to use this new board as a shield to maintain the protective system while advocating something else. That is really what the government has in mind. They want always to be able to hold up the opinions and the report of this advisory board as confirming them in what they are doing and shielding them from attack much in the same fashion as the Civil Service Commission is used to-day. I do not know that they have anybody particularly in mind for the appointment. So far as I know all their closest friends are now provided for. What they really want is something to stand between them and this constant attack for failure in office to implement the doctrines preached in opposition, and the advisory board is to serve that purpose. They also hope that it will be something in the nature of a consolation to those business interests of the country who are now much disturbed, who have utterly lost faith in them, who took their promises and found they were broken reeds. They hope by this advisory board they will stir up, as it were, once again the flickering flame of confidence in the administration that even after two or three years they are now coming back to fidelity to those more or less secret pledges by which they secured the support of the business interests in our country. That is what the government has in mind, so that it is not very much wonder that I am not very enthusiastic about it. I suppose, however, we ought to abandon all consideration of what is really moving the government in the matter and rest in the hope that, if they get a tariff board, at least we shall have something steadier in the country in the way of tariff policy even though we have nothing steadier in the way of tariff profession.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not want to take up the time of the committee by adding anything to the discussion that has taken place, but I do not think I ought to let pass the remarks of my right hon. friend creating the implication that this is intended as a tariff board. It is not intended as anything of the kind. It is expected to be precisely what the resolution states, a board to investigate and study various modes of