

board. We have some Liberals in this day and generation, and I was thinking of them when I looked at this resolution which the House is to consider in due course, the object of which is to rectify all the wrongs that at present exist in relation to the tariff, and to restore on the part of our Canadian people who are interested in industry some measure of confidence in the future of the country. The hon. member for West Kootenay (Mr. Humphrey) spoke about restoring confidence in the country, but I really think that what he had in mind was restoring confidence in this government. The government proposes to bring down a resolution looking to the establishment of a tariff board, and it occurred to me that the old Liberal ship of state was sinking so fast that the crew have to grab a plank from the Tory platform and nail it over the hole to stop the vessel from going down altogether.

Mr. MURDOCK: Hard luck.

Mr. HARRIS: Before I get through you will find that it is hard luck. Now, we have heard of tariff boards before. In 1912 a resolution was introduced which afterwards was known as Bill No. 88, and it was brought forward by the Conservative party for the purpose of creating a tariff board. There were great Liberal statesmen in the House of Commons in those days, common ordinary men like ourselves, among whom we find such names as Mr. Marcell, Mr. Kyte, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Robb, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Macdonald, and Mr. Lapointe. These gentlemen have changed from statesmen to the Hon. Mr. So and So. Let me quote a few sentences from speeches made by some of them. At page 2622 of Hansard of February 1912 we find Mr. Maclean, then member for Halifax, reported as follows:

I am opposed to his bill, because I believe it is a violation of constitutional practice in all British countries; because it directly or indirectly, and perhaps unconsciously, assumes to give a tariff commission powers of legislation.

I only wish I had a vocabulary like that; perhaps I might say something just as good.

I object to it because it tends to weaken the doctrine of ministerial responsibility as it obtains in all British countries. I object to it because the duties which, under the bill, are assigned to a commission, refer to matters which in all British countries are dealt with directly by the responsible advisers of the crown. I object to the bill, because the purpose sought to be attained by it can be better attained by less expensive and less objectionable methods.

That is the tariff board they will all vote for in a few days.

I object to it further because it seeks in a manner, in a veiled manner perhaps, to validate by a statute the doctrine of protection in this country.

[Mr. Harris.]

What a catastrophe!

This is a justification of my argument that any assistance which the responsible minister of the day requires in tariff making, should come from the civil service when we can expect permanency in the appointment and from whom we can expect a longer and more valued experience in all matters in connection with the tariff of this country.

Then at page 2655 the ordinary, common Mr. Kyte of that day, now known as the official whip of the Liberal party, is reported in opposition to the bill; he found it necessary to oppose the proposition. I hesitate to say anything about Sir Wilfrid Laurier for I have a good deal of regard for that Liberal statesman. I have an idea that somewhere in this House over on the government benches there are men who, while perhaps on the hustings they were wont to shout "Vive Laurier!" will take an attitude on the resolution about to be introduced, altogether different from that which the late right hon. gentleman assumed. I wonder how these gentlemen are going to vote in this matter of the tariff board. I wonder if they will read what that man had to say in his time with regard to the proposal. Will they rise in their place and register their vote in favour of it? As I say, I reverence the name of that man, but I may be pardoned for reading a few words of his. At page 2874 of Hansard of 1912 he said:

There is such a thing as an act and an ulterior motive to that act not to be found within the four corners of the act itself. My hon. friend did not put in his bill that the object which he had in view was to have, not the broad facts as they exist, but simply a commission to prepare for him, and for the government of which he is a member, in favour of the view upon political economy which my hon. friend and his colleagues entertain.

There is a good deal more but I will not put it all on the record; there are a few choice morsels that will serve the purpose better perhaps than the whole. Further he says:

The more we proceed with this tariff board the more it becomes apparent that we are moving in a vicious circle. . . . To say that under such circumstances the commission should be simply under the jurisdiction of the minister is not in accordance with the conception of the feature of the commission which would give it its greatest usefulness, that is that it should be an independent commission. . . . Such a course is inconceivable. This is the same thing, this should be above all things a parliamentary commission, of course with power to the government to use it when they think it advisable to do so.

Further on Sir Wilfrid Laurier said:

But no reason has yet been given why this second tribunal should be added to what we have already, or to show that it would be more in accordance with the public interest. Up to the present time we have had a law on the statute book declaring that under certain circumstances an investigation, if it took place, should take place before a judge. Has any reason