

*Customs Tariff*

increase have? Will it raise the price to the consumer? If not, what is the purpose of the increase? There can be only one hope in the mind of the furniture producer, and that is that if he succeeds in excluding that three per cent which is imported, he may be able to increase prices to the consumer. I was not elected to support higher tariffs, and I protest in this house against the increase in this or any other tariff. I do not believe it is good for the industry, for the consumer, or for the country as a whole.

Then the tariff board said the furniture industry was embarrassed by the tariffs on the products they imported to be used in their own factories. Well, Mr. Chairman, if that be true surely the obvious thing to do is to give that industry relief by removing those barriers to trade, which increase the prices of the materials used in furniture manufacturing. If we do that we will help the furniture industry and we will also help the consumers of Canada.

I repeat that I really feel very sympathetic towards the government. The Minister of Finance told us that after all is said and done the government must take responsibility for this action, that the recommendation of the tariff board is not final, and he added that it took the government days of consideration before coming to this conclusion. Well, I should think it would.

Mr. DUNNING: No, I said the government gave the matter days of consideration.

Mr. YOUNG: Quite so, and I take it that this conclusion was arrived at after days of consideration. I am not surprised at that, because it is a conclusion that must have been very hard for my good friend the Minister of Finance and the other members of the government to reach. What is the situation? Under the practice that has been followed in the last few years, if a matter is referred to the tariff board it is rather awkward if the government does not accept the recommendations of that board. What is the board there for? Its purpose is to bring out the facts, and they found the facts in this case. The conclusion is the only thing with which I disagree. The facts are very clear, and I must congratulate the board on the way they have been brought out, but I do not think the evidence justified the recommendations that were made. I am opposed to the present method of tariff board investigation. In former days we had public inquiries; the evidence was taken down and a Hansard was published, so the people of this country had access to the evidence. I think that should be done to-day. Following that I think a

[Mr. Young.]

report should be made to the Minister of Finance, and the recommendations of the board should be made available to the government, who must take the responsibility. To-day there is no Hansard of the evidence, but the recommendations of the board are made public. It is true that the evidence is laid on the table of the house, but it is not made available to the general public. That places the government in an awkward situation; unless they are prepared to accept those recommendations they may be fairly asked, "Well, why did you refer this matter to the board at all?"

I want to make a very strong protest against a Liberal government maintaining a group of men to investigate matters having to do with the fiscal policy of the country, which board holds views contrary to those of the party in power. When the people of this country elected the Liberal party they never expected that we would take our directions from a tariff board composed of three Conservatives. I want to make a strong protest against the retention of that board while the Liberal party is in power. As I said before, I want to be equally fair when the Liberal party is out of power. It would be reasonable to expect that another party would then select men to look into these matters who hold the same views as they hold. I am contenting myself to-day with the statement that the system is an embarrassing one, and should be removed. I am opposed to increases in tariff on this or on any other item. I believe all industry would be more beneficially helped by the removal of the restrictions on trade all along the line, so that all industries would be benefited thereby, and in addition the consumers of Canada would be very greatly helped.

I sincerely hope that after reflection the government may feel it wise to refer this matter back, even to the present board, to see whether it would not be the part of wisdom to have a further investigation and, let us trust, a proper conclusion from the facts which would be adduced.

Mr. MUTCH: Mr. Chairman, there is a time to speak and a time to be silent, but if possible on this particular occasion I should like to combine both those injunctions, because while I cannot be silent, at least I can be brief. I do not need to consult the oracle or retain counsel or go into committee with myself or obtain advice from any one in order to say to the committee that I am as much opposed to a Liberal government implementing the various ideas of a Tory tariff board as I was to the implementing of similar ideas by the right hon. gentleman who created it.