

*Customs Tariff*

way I have mentioned, namely by a statute in accordance with the act that now exists, as modified and amended. That is, the old one disappears and the new one takes its place, but the new one that takes its place is one which provides in terms not for someone else but for parliament to do it. What is more, if that is not in accordance with the principles of Liberalism as declared from this side of the house, I am unable to appreciate what they were. If a Conservative government had made proposals such as are contained in this statute, how the welkin would have rung! I direct attention to the plain undertaking of the Prime Minister of Canada, that certain words contained in the customs tariff will be restricted to one meaning and one only, and that parliament is going to do this; it is not to be left to the executive, or to the governor in council, or to someone else, but parliament itself is going to give effect to those words.

Mr. DUNNING: Well, in case there should be on the part of any country a belief that because of the opinion expressed by the right hon. leader of the opposition Canada is not carrying out the express terms of an undertaking solemnly given, I must on behalf of the government repudiate any such suggestion, and in doing so I need only quote from the letter itself:

Sir, I have the honour to inform you that the Canadian government, in accordance with its general policy respecting trade and tariff matters, has decided to make the following modifications in its customs regulations—

The Canadian government proposes "to make the following modifications in its customs regulations." Certainly the country receiving that message did not expect an act of parliament. It relied upon the good faith of the government of Canada to give effect, in the manner appropriate to Canadian conditions to the undertaking which the government of Canada had given.

Now, with respect to the other point, as to the power which is being extended to the executive by this amendment, and which is calling forth such condemnation by my right hon. friend, might I point out that it is a power to do what? To reduce the burden of the tariff. That is what it is; it is a power to reduce. It is a power which can be used to ensure that the dumping provisions of the law shall not be applied in cases where the quantity of the goods specified produced in Canada is so small as to have no real place in our commerce and industry. The case of anthracite coal cited by my hon. friend is an excellent illustration. I am sure he would not argue that because it was found that 900

[Mr. Bennett.]

tons of anthracite coal were produced somewhere in Canada, therefore all users of British anthracite coal should be compelled to pay a dump duty in addition to the price.

The argument in respect to duty is a different argument altogether, as I am sure my hon. friend from Comox-Alberni realizes. If he cares to argue that because we desire to encourage coal mining in Canada, therefore British anthracite coal should not be imported, that at least is arguable, but I am reasonably sure he would not argue that because someone somewhere in Canada produces 900 tons of anthracite coal, therefore all users of imported anthracite should be compelled to pay a higher price for the article they are importing. What is true in the case of anthracite coal has been true in connection with other commodities. That is the complaint, and the proposal is simply this, as a practical matter to carry into the law the principle stated in the note to Japan, but leaving liberty to the governor in council to determine the percentage. That liberty will be indicated in the manner indicated by the Minister of National Revenue. In the first instance, the percentage specified will be ten per cent because we have so agreed with Japan.

Mr. BENNETT: Not less than ten per cent.

Mr. DUNNING: Quantities sufficient to supply at least ten per cent, yes; that is the phraseology. Let us consider it as a practical question. We are here endeavouring for the first time to define the quantity. The Minister of National Revenue and his officers have used the best judgment of which they are capable in setting it at ten per cent, without, remember, having had experience in trying to set a percentage basis, and we have said to Japan, in order to get on a friendly trading basis with her once more, that we will set it at ten per cent. But does that mean that if, as a result of experience with ten per cent as the limit, we find that it is injurious to Canadian industry, on the one hand, or to Canadian consumers, on the other we are not to be at liberty to approach Japan and point out in connection with this single undertaking that embarrassing conditions are being created in Canada and that, therefore, we would like to be released from the obligation or to change it in some particular? That is the reason for the proposal of the government that the actual percentage should be determined by order in council, without in any way at all intending to go back in the slightest degree on our undertaking with Japan, but it leaves us at liberty to negotiate with