

Mr. PETER MCGIBBON (Muskoka-Ontario): Mr. Speaker, in rising to continue the debate on the budget I should like first to offer my congratulations to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) on his restoration to health. I am sure most of us who knew of the very serious illness he had last summer were more than glad to see him take his place in the House of Commons this session. Coupled with that I feel it is my duty as a member of parliament to voice my protest at the minister's continued absence from the house. Since coming into parliament in 1917 one thing that has impressed me has been the continued attention ministers of finance have paid to all suggestions coming from any quarter of the house. I remember Sir Thomas White, the Hon. A. K. Maclean, later on Mr. Fielding and Mr. Robb, who were practically always in the house when their budgets were being discussed, trying to get what information they could and gave it that courteous attention which suggestions from any part of the house should receive.

Speaking as a Conservative, I think the Conservative party have had paid to them in this budget one of the greatest compliments that has ever been paid to any party in any legislative hall in the world. For fifty years we have been advocating a policy of adequate protection for industry, the farmers, the labouring men and the consumers. During all that time we have been met with policies that have varied almost with the seasons and that have been discarded almost as often as the birds discard their nests. We had hon. gentlemen advocate unrestricted reciprocity under the treaty of 1911, free trade as they had it in England and, last but not least, the platform of 1919. All of these were more or less of one nature; that is, they bordered upon free trade. It is true that during the election of 1921 the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) disregarded his platform and said that he had a "chart." I suppose we have the fruits of that navigation to-day when in this budget the Prime Minister has practically discarded all the past and has come out for a policy of protection. We are told in history that prophets have been stoned by their lineal descendants. While it may be true that the present Minister of Finance has not stoned all the ministers of finance and lieutenants of the party of the past, he certainly has built their sepulchres and has cremated their policies into ashes.

But you cannot steal other people's brains successfully, and this budget has failed be-

cause hon. gentlemen opposite have not the skill, the experience, the ability and the courage to enforce it properly. We who have been forced to make our living by practising surgery have at times been compelled to ask our clients to undergo severe operations. When we see the stage of dissolution appearing, when we see their strength fading, we sometimes have to ask them to give us greater liberty to take some risk of their lives. Sometimes it is necessary to cut deep into the vital organs to remove some dangerous growth. At other times we have to transfuse into their arteries life-giving fluid in order to prolong their lives. In this budget it seems to me that the Minister of Finance has been attempting to transfuse into the old sclerotic arteries of the Liberal party some of the life-giving fluid of the protectionist doctrine which this party has advocated for many years gone by. But he has failed because he lacks the skill, the technique and—this is the greatest cause of all—because he lacks the courage to do the thing properly.

On one occasion Disraeli, criticising the government of the day, stated that there were three courses open to it: the course they had left, the course they had pursued, and the course they ought to have pursued. I want for a moment or two to view the actions of the government somewhat in that fashion. I will not say much about the course which they have left except that what they have done is a confession that for thirty or forty years they have been preaching false doctrines to the people of Canada and at last they have been converted. It may be a deathbed conversion, as we think it is; and in that case I should like to remind them that sacred history records only one successful deathbed repentance, that of the thief on the cross. So much for what they have left.

Forgetting for the moment the intermediate course, I want to ask them what they should have done. The answer has been given in the language of my leader when in his speech in the house the other day he said that it was their duty to vacate their seats and give place to Canadians who would produce a Canadian policy for the Canadian people. That is what I conceive was their duty. In place of that we have, as has been pointed out this afternoon and in days gone by, a policy that has its genesis in the city of Washington and that is written by the president of the United States. Sir, we object to that. We think that the policy of this country should be written by Canadians. As far as that limited part of the budget is concerned, all that the finance minister