

consumers in general. Nobody disputes that at this stage of our economic argument. Having submitted to the bargainees, the consumers, farmers, labourers of this country, the proposition that protection itself means a higher price for what they have to buy, is the burden of proof not strictly against those who proclaim that? Yes, but they say, we will give you compensating advantages in the shape of a stiffened and enlivened market for what you have to sell. The burden of proof is against those who propose that bargain or proposition. I say with all confidence that that burden of proof has not yet been discharged in all the arguments, real and academic, which we have had for half a century in Canada. Throughout this discussion, nobody on your immediate left, Mr. Speaker, has discharged that burden of proof or shown that in return for the detriment of those higher prices and that higher cost of living, they have got or can get back any corresponding advantages which will outweigh that disadvantage in the welfare of the country at large.

This budget proposes to reduce the customs tariff, and thereby it reduces the expense of production. Thereby, it reduces the cost of living, and for that blessing I, as a consumer, feel profoundly thankful. But that is not the main significance and importance of this budget, which lie deeper. I take it that the main significance of this budget lies in the fact that it provides recognition of this fact, namely, that you must relieve the primary industries in this great country of the burden of high protection in order to have the fiscal soundness for which we seek.

Mr. LADNER: Does the hon. gentleman state that we have high protection in Canada?

Mr. PUTNAM: That, to me, is much a matter of the viewpoint of the one who analyses it.

Mr. LADNER: What is the hon. member's viewpoint?

Mr. PUTNAM: From my poor remarks thus far forth, is the hon. gentleman still under the belief that I consider that at this time the protective tariff is not too high in Canada?

Mr. LADNER: I have not heard the hon. gentleman's remarks thus far forth; I might have heard the ones that he has just delivered; but, in my judgment, he has made a very general statement in regard to the tariff without specifying.

Mr. PUTNAM: I should hope that the hon. gentleman might be able to draw a very [Mr. Putnam.]

few palpable deductions. I do not propose to be questioned for the mere sake of interrogation. It is a tribute, I think, which I pay to the hon. gentleman's intelligence that I refuse to answer his question. I was going to illustrate that if I were a wanderer in an arid country and very thirsty, I think, as a man still retaining my common sense, I should look for water.

An hon. MEMBER: Why water?

Mr. PUTNAM: Because this is Ontario. If I should reverse the process by looking for some dish out of which I might drink the water if I should find it, I should be in the position of those protectionists who tell the farmers that if they would only first and now give them ample protection on secondary industries, all would be well with the farmers. I remember travelling in the Rocky mountains and meeting there an Irishman. He was taking frequent drinks from a bottle, not of water—this will interest the last interrupter—and he did this under the pretence that when he poured whisky down his own throat, it was an excellent cure for his wife's corns. While the connection may be a little remote, I think it is just as intimate and logical as in the case of the protectionist who is telling the men from the plains on his left that protection in Canada is the cure for all their ills and that high protection will assure them the prosperity of which they have long been in fruitless search.

At this particular time, if any policy could be devised which would be really a national policy, it should be hailed with delight. We have been taught over and over again, and correctly, to act nationally, to think nationally, in this Canada of ours. I submit that protection itself is the very reverse of a national policy. It subsidizes some industries at the expense of others and of the consumers in general. I listened with interest to the amendment which was moved by the newly elected hon. member for Kent, N.B. (Mr. Doucet). It seemed to me that, when we have here a place for the leader of the opposition, a place wherein he is paid for his distinguished and, in the present instance, I will say faithful services, it is almost a pity in a constitutional sense, not questioning for a moment the ruling of the Speaker, that that amendment had to go by the board because here was an opposition led by a leader highly paid for the job and they could not use their own amendment as a nucleus round which to rally and express their views upon this tariff. But having said that much when I come to the merits of the amendment itself, when I come to the con-