

The Budget—Mr. Stirling

the people above the holding of power, and it prefers experimenting to plodding in the narrow ruts of the past. Liberty, justice, equality, local autonomy and uprightness are ideals from which the Liberal party must never depart. A great American poet wrote that:

"Freedom, from her mountain height,
Unfurled her standard to the air."

Let our Canadians never forget that freedom united to progress must ever be found on lofty heights.

Mr. GROTE STIRLING (Yale): Mr. Speaker, there is a feature in regard to the proposals of the government concerning the schedules on fruits and vegetables in which they appear to be departing from the principles they have been supposed to follow all these years; apparently they have grasped at protection and gone crazy. In a great many instances it will be found that they are proposing further protection than that for which the fruit and vegetable growers have asked, and if the Liberal doctrine be true that of necessity an extra duty means a higher price to the consumer, then the consumer will have to pay more for his fruit and vegetables in the future. Certainly he must be careful not to put the blame for that increase on the producer; he must not say to the producer, "This is what you have been clamouring for all these years. We knew what would happen; the price has risen to us, and you are to blame."

I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that an examination of these schedules will show that the proposals of the government in a considerable number of instances go further than the producer asked to have them go. For years past, in his divisional organizations, the fruit and vegetable grower has been discussing the amounts of duty to which, in his opinion, the specific rates should be raised in order to give him that protection he considers to be his due. These discussions have been carried on in his provincial organizations; they have been taken up by the national organization and presented to the Advisory Board on Tariff and Taxation ever since its inception, through the medium of the Canadian Horticultural Council. The basis of the producer's plea always has been that we can produce the quality and we are convinced that we can produce a much greater quantity, displacing some of the importations of those commodities from other countries, if we are given reasonable facilities for so doing, but the producer always has had in the back of his mind the position occupied by the con-

[Mr. St-Père.]

sumer. It has not been the wish of the producer to initiate such high rates of duty as of necessity will perturb the consumer, for if the consumer is too severely handled in this matter he will buy less and we shall have a smaller distribution. In the working out of the problems which confront us, both fruit and vegetable growers look for a greater and more perfect distribution through the markets of Canada than we have attained as yet.

In connection with certain highly perishable commodities such as peaches and strawberries the proposition put forward by the producer has been that the specific tariff should be increased. That tariff should be applicable during the period of our production, but before and after certain dates which may be set by the minister the tariff is no intimate concern of the producer. However, examination of these proposed schedules will indicate that in a great number of cases the producer has been given the amount of specific duty for which he asked not only during the time of his production but during the whole year, and in addition he has been given something more for which he did not ask. In many cases the specific rate of duty has been raised to the amount asked for by the producer, although not in all cases; this is to be kept on the year round, so that when Canadian production has ceased and there are no Canadian fruits and vegetables on our markets which would tend to stabilize prices, the tariff will increase, the price will rise and the enhanced price very probably will be passed on by the trade to the consumer. Over and above that, however, the producer has been given something further for which he did not ask. The present proposal of the government is that in addition to these specific duties there shall be an ad valorem duty which shall be alternative to the specific rate, and whichever is the higher shall be collected. The ad valorem rate on vegetables is 30 per cent; the rate on fruits is 25 per cent, and the duty which is higher, as between the ad valorem and the specific, will be collected. I think the way that would work out would be as follows: when Canadian production is moving on to the markets in full volume, the price would tend to be low and the specific duty would be higher; when Canadian production is over the price would tend to rise, and it would then come under the ad valorem duty. I am persuaded that the higher price will be passed on to the consumer. The revenue of Canada will benefit, but the consumer will pay more for his necessities and it is hard to understand how the grower will benefit thereby.