

producers in other countries. Is not that the very sentiment expressed by those who support protection, and is it not thus the manufacturer receives an advantage? Again, protection protects the product of labour from competition, while it puts labour itself on the free list. I ask every hon. member who will look upon this subject in a reasonable and sensible light, if it can be supposed for a moment that protection is being afforded to the labouring class, or that protection ever raised the wages of the people one cent? When the labour market is fully supplied the value of labour is low, and when the labour market is stringent then the price of labour rises. When we have spent over \$3,000,000 during the last fifteen years in trying to bring labourers here from foreign countries, and have sent agents to London, Liverpool and Manchester, and to France and other countries of the world, setting forth the advantages to be obtained here in the labour market, and urging workmen to come here to compete with our labourers, is it not hard on our labourers to have to meet this competition, owing to the action and influence of the Government, while at the same time the products of foreign countries cannot come in here because our manufacturers want to make large profits out of their products. The whole system is wrong from the foundation to the last shingle on the roof, wrong east, west, north and south, the whole system has no basis on which it can be justified. Therefore, the country will regret very much that this principle is to be continued. Protection compels 90 per cent of our people to pay a bonus, a subsidy, to go into the pockets of the other one-tenth of the population, and at the same time forces the 90 per cent to sell their labour in the free markets of the world. Take the farmers of this country. It has been acknowledged by Conservatives last year, and probably it will be acknowledged by them this year, that it is impossible to protect the farmers, that so soon as there is a surplus in the country which is to be sold in the foreign market, and which comes into competition with the products of other countries in the open market, the bushel, pound or ton, which goes into that foreign market gives a price to the bushel, pound or ton of the products of a similar character that remain at home. That is an economic question on which there is no divergence of opinion. It is not possible to protect the farmer except in some small localities, special points, geographically close to the United States; but taking the broad principle, it is impossible to protect the farming interest, because it exports a surplus of products. The farmers constitute two millions and a half of our people, and when you add the labourers on the farm, and the labourers employed on works such as canals and railways, they constitute 90 per cent of the population, and therefore only about 10 per cent of the population receive direct

Mr. MACDONALD (Huron).

benefit from the National Policy, even if they receive very much advantage. Is it right and just to take money out of the pockets of this 90 per cent of the people, whom you cannot protect, and to place it directly in the pockets of those who receive the advantage of protection? I say that it is a blunder, and it is a policy which will never develop the interests of this country as those interests should be developed. But there is another argument against protection which I think should be considered. Protection is the parent of combines, trusts and monopolies, which fleece the consumer. I am sure I need no argument to convince the hon. members of this House on that point. The Controller of Customs, a few years ago, saw that to such an extent that he asked Parliament to give him a committee to investigate into the combines of the country, and the result was that a report was presented to this House which showed that the combines and trusts and associations of that kind, had fleeced the consumers of Canada to an extraordinary degree; so much so that it was deemed advisable to bring in a Bill to prevent them carrying on their nefarious traffic. I had a little experience this summer in combines. I wanted some plate glass, and I asked for tenders from the plate glass companies of Ontario, but noticing the heading of the tenders, I found that they were all headed "Dominion Stained Glass Co.," and that there was only four or five dollars difference in the amounts which they asked me. I went to work and I found in another province a company that was not in the combine, and I purchased from them, and by so doing I saved 20 per cent on the prices asked me by the glass combine of Ontario. Does not that go to show that if I had bought from the Ontario combines, and if I had not gone out and beyond my own province, that on the little purchase of \$325 of plate glass which I made, I would have been fleeced \$75. There can hardly be a business in this country to-day that is not in the hands of a combine, where they meet and decide how much product they will put on the market, what price they will ask for it, and in which they control the independence of smaller concerns and in every instance fleece the public. What is the cause of that? Nothing else but the protective system, for if there were free trade or anything approaching it, there would be free and open competition, which would prevent the manufacturers taking this unfair advantage of the Canadian consumers who are made to pay and protect them. But, Mr. Speaker, protection enables the manufacturer to unload a glutted market at a loss, or at a lesser profit, and to recoup himself then at the expense of the consumers of Canada. Hon. gentlemen know that, whether they be Conservatives or not. You all know that the large industries of this country export and sell to outsiders, very frequently at a lower price than they ordinarily charge; and that when they come