

## Protection and Cost of Living

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THE EDITOR, Sir: The present Government has embarked on a policy of giving blanket protection to local industries by banning the importation of foreign products which could compete with local ones.

This seems like putting the cart before the horse, as competition is the best way of improving the quality of local goods. Why should our producers aim at efficiency when the consumers have no choice, and Government protects inefficiency?

The only way to judge the standard of local products is by comparing them with their foreign counter-part in quality and price. Hence the banning of foreign goods destroys the only means of knowing how efficient — or inefficient, are our local producers.

It also increases the cost of living, as the consumer, denied freedom of choice, is forced to buy inferior goods at higher prices than the current state of production allows — thus lowering their standard of living.

Protection is always at the consumer's expense, enabling a few incompetent and inefficient producers to enrich themselves at the community's expense. Competition is the law of life, and those who are unfit to survive should be allowed to die a natural death — and be replaced by those fitter and more able to give efficient service.

Isn't it ironical that just when the world is reducing tariffs and breaking down trading barriers, we're increasing the obstacles to trade with our neighbours? We welcome aid from America's Alliance for Progress; yet deny them market for their goods with which to finance it? The mutual interdependence of nations is thwarted by obstructions to Trade, as it creates unemployment and lower living standards abroad, and increases the cost of living at home. We're our brother's keeper — whether we like it or not! Don't we want to sell more abroad? Let's "do unto others what we'd like them to do unto us!"

I am, etc.,

P. WALLACE.

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