

stretching out one hand to Europe and the other to Asia, and inviting the commerce of both hemispheres to enter its wide open portals, free as the wind that fills the canvas. Depend upon it, Sir, if this is to be the true north-west passage, the gates must be thrown open. Let us not repel commerce, but woo it. I venture to think that the resolution which I have the honour to offer proposes to deal with the matter in the most statesmanlike way; and I trust it will commend itself to the judgment, and receive the support, of all parties in the House.

Hon. Mr. HOLBROOK, whilst believing that the establishment of a free port at Victoria might be beneficial to the interests of the Lower Fraser, did not think it would be for the general good of the Colony. In his opinion the agricultural interests wanted protection. For the present he must vote against the Hon. Member for New Westminster. He thought that such questions ought to be left to the Dominion Government.

Hon. Mr. DECOSMOS—After the very, I will not say unusual, but unexpected, remarks in reference to myself, I must crave the indulgence of the House whilst I say a few words to set myself right. Sir, I had something to do with the Yale Convention, and I am not ashamed of my connection with it; my political standard was unfurled then as it is to-day. When I first entered upon politics in this country I established a high political standard, which would take the measure of a political trickster as well as that of a statesman. There is nothing in the conduct of the hon. member for New Westminster either here or at Yale to entitle him to the name of statesman. I say, Sir, that I am as free as I was at Yale to vote for that clause, and if it can be got into the terms I will vote for it. I brought the question up at Yale because I knew that there was a party in Victoria favourable to free port, and I wished to see the question fought out after Confederation, not before. The Hon. gentleman was defeated; he could not get the Yale Convention to endorse the retaining of the Assay Office at New Westminster, and he took his defeat very much to heart. [Hon. Mr. Robson—Untrue, untrue.] The Hon. Member for Yale came to me and said:—"You concede this point as to the Assay Office and I will yield the free port. We don't want Mr. Robson to leave." That's how it came to be in the Yale resolutions. Since to this Colony I came, I have never swerved from protection. In the first article I wrote for a newspaper in this Colony the word "protection" occurs. I want to see the Canadian revenue laws extended here; I want to see power in the Local Government to protect the industrial interests of the Colony. I would like to know who has changed the Hon. gentleman's opinions. I spent my time and money in getting protection. I challenged a gentleman on the floor of this House to retire, and I did retire; I hoisted the flag of protection and won.

Hon. Mr. BARNARD—I wish to state that what the Hon. gentleman said was true, except that he mistook the Hon. Mr. Robson for Hon. Mr. Holbrook.

Hon. Dr. HELMCKEN—We are here to remedy evils likely to occur from Confederation, evils which are admitted by every member of this Council. That there is an evil even the Hon. Member for New Westminster has admitted. [Hon. Mr. Robson—No.] The Hon. gentleman makes his net so wide that he slips through; but he said in effect that the difficulty was irremediable, and to get out of it he proposes not general free trade, but free trade in certain special articles. If the Canadian Government can agree to one they can to the other. I believe that if we show the Canadian Government that the Canadian tariff would be an evil they will find means to remove the evil. I believe a tariff fair and suitable to this Colony will be made. I believe we have gone so far right; we have resolved that our agriculture shall be protected. Now comes the question as to commerce. We want articles of commerce as cheap as possible; our trade is chiefly retail, nevertheless it is important, and should be fostered. I think that everything we can do to increase the population of this country is of importance. I therefore propose this resolution:—

"That in the opinion of this Council it is advisable that after Union foreign manufactured articles in which trade can be carried on with neighbouring countries shall be admitted into this Colony at a low nominal rate of duty, and generally the tariff should be made to suit the commercial condition of the Colony."

I think free trade in Vancouver Island would be beneficial with protection to agriculturists, but I do not think it desirable, except in a limited way. Does any one imagine that if free port was restored to Victoria her prosperity would return? In more early days, when she enjoyed free port, there were not the obstructions to free trade with the neighbouring country that there are at present. Now there are Custom House officers to prevent smuggling, and a great deal of illicit trade is checked. With regard to free trade: In former days we were far