

or not suffer, they insist upon it. I say nothing now of my convictions. I think, however, that the theory of free trade goes too far. "Free trade" is quoted as if it were a golden rule. I believe that free trade is an exceedingly elastic idea; there is no orthodoxy in it. It is not a law of physics, like the law of gravitation, or some abstruse and elaborate theory like Sturm's problem, or the stability of the eccentricity of the planetary orbits, to which there is no exception. It is elastic, and suits one country and not another; it suits old countries and not new; it suits England for the reasons I have stated. Her manufactures are her staples. She can undersell the world. People may say that free trade is applicable equally to other places and to all classes of industries. As to this, I have my own opinions. But so far as this discussion is concerned, I deal with the world as I find it. New countries desire protection. Why? No matter why—they do desire it. Dealing with protection in a moderate way, I think it may be reasonably conceded that a moderate protection, in the way of customs duties at least, may be applied to staple productions and agriculture. But whether the opinion be sound or not, colonial experience shows us that this is the line of argument pursued and acted on. Taking it for granted, as admitted by some political writers of eminence, that we may reasonably protect staples until they can support themselves, let us see what legitimate protection may be afforded to existing interests in this Colony. Agriculture may be protected, or rather fostered, in numbers of ways—by facilities for the acquisition of land, by roads, by immigration of farm hands, by the admission of implements free, and by a moderate tariff on produce. Agriculture, it must be remembered, is not only the cultivation of the land; it is bound up with local interests, and carries with it a local population attached to the soil. If you want population localized you must encourage agricultural interests. Besides this, it must not be lost sight of that it is a practical remedy against poverty. If a man has certain faculties for acquiring or being employed as a labourer on land, he need never go to the poor-house; it humanizes men. It is the duty of every politician to protect agricultural interests in a new country, to the best of his power. Now, with regard to staples: I say they may reasonably be protected and fostered in their infancy, because they are the real wealth of the nation. It is said that at first the wool interest of Australia was carried on at a loss; and for a country like this, that can produce without limit, fish, lumber, and coals, to say nothing of gold, we must give all the facilities in our power to induce industry in these walks of life. Take the gold miner: We might give him his gold license cheap, and make the acquisition of claims easy; provide him with roads and trails; and in this way we might "protect" the miner and encourage mining interests. Fisheries—how are they to be protected? By the promotion of information as to markets for fish; by pushing those markets; by local knowledge of the haunts of fish; by cheap implements, and by cheap salt. To promote the lumber interest, we might give cheap machinery, so far as we can, by admitting it free, and let persons acquire land easily. Shipwrights might also be legitimately protected and encouraged by making implements and materials cheap, and by giving encouragement to docks. Let us do everything to promote the interests of ships. Where there are such natural inlets as ours, with coal at hand, and facilities for the importation of iron and steel for building ships, we could build cheaper than anywhere on this coast; not, of course, so cheaply as on the Clyde, but still we might attract some ship-builders. Now as to trade—export trade. This is surely an item, though possibly a small item, in our wealth; yet still, if we export only to Puget Sound, we might encourage such commerce. It is an industry and a source of wealth; it causes foreign ships to come, and causes an expenditure of money in our ports; it adds to the number of merchants, drays, and labourers, and increases general business; a vitality is given by it which makes it an element of wealth; it seems to have been beneficial here, and certain it is that it is estimated in this Colony as a material interest. How is this export trade to be protected? Some say by free port, that is to say, no Customs duties; others say: "Reduce taxation to a minimum on goods in which there is a tangible export trade." Within these limits of what we may call moderate protection, we may reasonably suppose the Colonists of British Columbia to be desirous to legislate; and suppose we desire to have implements of labour and machinery, and some goods cheap and free, and put ten per cent. on imported agricultural produce. This is the reverse of Canadian policy. As regards machinery, I believe the Canadian tariff gives fifteen per cent. on manufactured machinery at least. There is nothing to prevent the Canadian tariff from being increased. Protection may run rampant in the Dominion. You have no guarantee. I say that in these fiscal questions we are at issue as affects some of our most important elements of