

Hon. COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS asked if Hon. Mr. Robson had any resolution to propose.

Hon. Mr. ROBSON said that at present he was replying to remarks that had been made by other Hon. gentlemen.

Hon. ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that the course that the Hon. gentleman was pursuing was embarrassing, and would tend to complicate the question before the House, and proceeded to correct a statement which he understood Hon. Mr. Robson to have made as to what had fallen from the Hon. Chief Commissioner, Hon. Mr. Hamley, and himself on a previous occasion as to the right to control tariff being in the Provinces after Union.

Hon. Mr. DECOSMOS—Anyone who knows the history of the United States knows that if any question of dealing with the tariff law in any manner other than Federal could arise, it would be in reference to groups of States instead of single States. I say, then, that we must consider this as a group of Provinces of the Dominion. Many years will probably not elapse before we see groups of States distinguished as Pacific and Atlantic, or East and West, and North and South, in the neighbouring Republic.

Hon. Mr. ROBSON—I rise to move a resolution. It is the same as that proposed at the Yale Convention by the Hon. Member for Victoria District, in 1867.

Hon. DR. HELMCKEN and ATTORNEY-GENERAL—What Convention? We know of no Convention.

Hon. Mr. ROBSON—I have a perfect right to allude to what took place at the little Parliament at Yale. I believe this to be the proper way to approach the subject. The resolution which I propose is as follows:—

“That a respectful Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor recommending that the following may be included in the conditions of the proposed terms of Union with Canada: ‘If at any time after the admission, the Legislature of British Columbia shall pass an Address to the Governor-General of Canada declaring that it is expedient to establish a free port on the Pacific in order to advance the interests of British commerce in the North Pacific, the Parliament of the Dominion to make provision for the establishment of the same.’”

It is astonishing to find what a change has come over the Hon. Mr. DeCosmos since he changed his city seat for a rural seat. He is becoming less capable of taking a statesmanlike view of these things than he was two years ago. I think by providing that if the new Council shall, after due deliberation, find it desirable, that a free port shall be established in this Colony is, after all, the proper way. I cannot think that this House, with the small representative element that it has, should be asked to decide this point. I say that the tendency of the Canadian policy is in the direction of free trade. [No, no, from the Hon. Mr. DeCosmos.] I say it is, and there is a speech of Sir G. E. Cartier recently published, in which he says that the tendency of Canadian policy is towards free trade. Now, I believe, that a great British Empire is to be established on this Continent,—the Greater Britain; and I believe that all British manufactures will be admitted free. If Great Britain takes her true part in pushing forward this Empire, she will naturally expect some advantages; she will naturally look for some immediate financial result. Every unproductive labourer in England is a tax upon the others; but transfer them to the Dominion and they will become producers and consumers. I believe it to be of the first importance that there should be a free port here. By a free port I do not mean that everything should necessarily be admitted free. There is no reason why local industries, and especially agricultural interests, should not continue to enjoy substantial protection. I believe the Canadian Government will readily realize the advantages of the policy of having a free port on the Pacific. There could be no local jealousies growing out of it. The Provinces on the Atlantic could not object. Our free port would attract commerce and wealth to the nation which they could not possibly attract, and thus enrich the nation and reflexly benefit all. I maintain that while the larger advantages would be local, the general advantages would be very considerable. I was gratified in reading a leading article in the *Ottawa Times*, the organ of the Dominion Government, in which the theory of a free port for the Dominion on the Pacific is strongly and ably advocated; and this article forms a complete answer to those who allege that the Canadian statesmen would never listen to any such proposition. If it should be decided that a free port would conduce to the interest of the Province and, consequently, to the interest of the Dominion, why should not we have it? Why should we object? What more glorious idea can there be than that of a British Empire extending across the Continent, with its back to the North Pole, with its face looking Southward, I will not venture to say how far; with one foot planted on the Atlantic and the other on the Pacific.