



THE

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## FREE TRADE IN FOREIGN PRODUCTIONS.

In our last we submitted some observations respecting the probable influence which a free-trade in foreign agricultural productions would have upon the agriculture of this country. We did not offer these remarks from any dissatisfaction at the present state of the law, but because we apprehended efforts would be made to change, or entirely abrogate, the Agricultural Protection Bill, that has been so lately conceded to the farmers of Canada. Such a change would, in the first place, put an end to all confidence in the duration of our laws; and, in the second place, would be a great injustice towards the agricultural class, who have as strong a claim to protection as any other class in this Province.

We object to free-trade in Agricultural produce until there is complete free-trade in all other products, and in the ships employed in commerce. Let there be an end to all protection; let the produce of the earth, and of man's industry circulate freely, and by the cheapest conveyances, whoever may be the carriers, and the Agricultural class will not complain; but they will ever complain of injustice towards them, if laws will not provide them the same amount of protection that it affords to capital and industry employed in shipping, manufactures, commerce, and trade. While the laws are not equal they must tax one portion of the community for the benefit of the other; and this has been the case in Canada during our long residence in it, up to a very late period. The Agricultural class were obliged to sell their produce in competition with foreigners, without any protection, while they had to purchase what they required from parties amply protected. In addition to this, the carrying trade to and from the Province was exclusively in British ships, the charge of freight necessarily higher than if open to foreign competition, and this could not fail to influence injuriously the price of what the farmer sold, as well as what he bought, diminish-

ing the one, and augmenting the other. We offer no objection to the state of the law, as it now affords farmers protection, but, on behalf of the class to which we belong, we protest against any partial change that would do away, or even diminish the amount of protection the law affords at present to Canadian Agriculture, unless a similar change be introduced in the law as it regards all other manufactures, trade, commerce, and shipping. British justice will, we confidently trust, make a general free trade, or none. She never will consent that one portion of her subjects shall be taxed for the benefit of other portions, as they inevitably must be, if the manufacturers of corn and cattle are not equally protected as the manufacturers and traders in silk, cotton, cloth, hardware, &c., and the shipping employed in British commerce. We may be answered, that British manufactures are now arrived at that state of perfection and cheapness, from the great amount of skill, machinery, and capital employed, that they require no protection. We will not argue this matter here, but merely observe, that if no protection is required, it would be well to begin with doing away with every protection law on the statute book in favour of manufactures and trade, before the laws for the protection of Agriculture are repealed. This, we conceive, would be the just manner of proceeding; that those who call loudly for the abrogation of laws that protect other interests, should begin with demanding the abrogation of the laws which protect their own, directly or indirectly. The protection that has been afforded to trade and manufactures has been the chief cause that trade and manufactures have been able to accumulate so vast an amount of capital, chiefly from the products of Agriculture. Whatever opinion may be entertained to the contrary, the products of Agriculture has been the chief source of support and profit to the manufacturers and trade of the British Empire. It was chiefly from Agriculture that an exchangeable product