

agoists, or partial to Canada. I believe that Canadians as a people are no better than others and no worse. I have no ties in Canada, no particular reason for entertaining any feeling of affection for Canada; and if I did not believe that the advance which we make will be met in a becoming spirit, ["hear, hear,"] then I should be of opinion that Confederation would be nothing more than an union on paper, one not beneficial to this Colony or to Canada. There are Statesmen there, Sir, who know that it would be useless to try to bend us down on terms, for what would be the use of Confederation if afterwards turned out that this Colony was injured, rather than benefited, by it. The Honourable Junior Member for Victoria asks what guarantee have we that the terms will be carried out. I say at once, Sir, that if the terms are not carried out, if the Canadian Government repudiate their part of the agreement, we shall be equally at liberty to repudiate ours. [Dr. Helmcken.—"How?"] We should, I maintain, be at liberty to change; but I for one do not approach this subject with any such feeling. ["Hear, hear," from Mr. DeCosmos.] There are always two sides to a bargain, and if the terms which are frankly and honestly proposed, are not fairly and honorably dealt with, we should in my opinion be at perfect liberty to draw back.

There is, however, one real and practical objection which has always suggested itself to my mind, from the first; and that is, that the same measures that apply to the circumstances of Canada, such as tariff, will not apply equally in all respects to this Colony. It will be asked, then, why is there no suggestion as to some alteration or modification of the tariff in the terms. The reason is somewhat similar to the reason for the omission of all mention of Responsible Government. You would find it very difficult to come to any conclusions on this subject in this Council. It is impracticable to define now positively what precise tariff would best suit this Country. Some favour a Free Port. I should be inclined to favour it myself if I believed it practicable. Some, on the other hand, say that we must have protection to agriculture, and that without it we cannot compete with the farmers of Oregon. This point was fully discussed in the Executive Council, but it was decided to omit any conditions for the regulation of Customs dues from these terms; and I do not think that this measure ought to be complicated with the tariff question. I believe that we may safely trust this people with whom we are about to negotiate, to do as much for us in this direction as we could do for ourselves; it will be to their interest to do so. It requires no argument to show that it will be to the interest of Canada, after Confederation, to advance the prosperity of this Country. If it be possible to adopt a special tariff to this part of the Colony, and I see no reason why it should not be adopted, I confidently hope to see such a special tariff arranged under Confederation. ["Hear, hear," from Mr. DeCosmos.] Rely upon it, Sir, that there are Statesmen in Canada who have a far wider and longer political experience than Members of this House, and who would be able to point out many means of prosperity, for which we are looking with so much anxiety,—powerful minds, before which I feel humbled,—men who I cannot for a moment suppose would fail to see as plainly as we do that Confederation would be of no benefit to Canada unless it redounded to the advantage of British Columbia. This requires no argument, it is perfectly plain common sense.

If we are not to have Confederation, what are we to have? What is the proposition of those who oppose Confederation? The people of this Colony have been, for a long time past, asking for a change; and it has been the policy of those who ask for change to throw the blame of everything upon the Government. The policy of the Imperial Government on this matter is clearly expressed in Earl Granville's despatch. He does not say you must concede, whether you will or not; it is left to the people to decide this question for themselves; but he says virtually "You have for years been asking for a change, you complain that your present form of Government does not suit you; we point out for your consideration Confederation, which, if it suits you, we favour; the Government of Canada is ready to step in and assist you to carry out your views for the advancement of your local interests." Now, Sir, I say to this Council,—If you don't want Confederation, what do you want? To remain as you are? This I know you are not satisfied to do. What then? Establish a sort of independent Government of about 6,000 people, connected with nobody, owing allegiance to

nobody? The idea is absurd. There appears, then, to be no alternative to Confederation, but that suggestion which has been shadowed forth during this debate, and which I for one decline to consider as a possibility.

And so we come to Confederation as our manifest destiny.

To sum up my argument in support of the motion of the Hon. the Attorney General. I advocate Confederation because it will secure the continuance of this Colony under the British Flag, and strengthen British interests on this Continent; and because it will benefit this community, by lessening taxation and giving increased Revenue for Local Expenditure; by advancing the political status of the Colony; by securing the practical aid of the Dominion Government who are, I believe, able to—and whose special care it would be to devise and—carry into effect measures tending to develop the natural resources, and to promote the prosperity of this Colony; and by affording, through a Railway, the only means of acquiring a permanent population, which must come from the East of the Rocky Mountains.

The Hon. Mr. HOLBROOK said.—Sir, In rising to continue this debate, after the able speech of the Hon. Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, I feel that there is little left for me to say, as when we go into Committee I shall have an opportunity of expressing my opinion upon the terms; and it would be factious to oppose a measure which has to come before the people for their decision. The way, Sir, that I understand the question of Confederation to stand at present, is that it is not a mere abstract question of Confederation with Canada, but a question of certain terms which have to be laid before the people; therefore, I say that any opposition against this being done would be factious. As regards myself, I shall abide by such decision, whatever it may be, as I consider the people themselves are the best judges as to whether they will benefit, or otherwise, by becoming part and parcel of the Dominion of Canada. This matter has evidently been well considered by the Executive Council, most of whom are largely interested in the welfare of the Colony, and several of them have been as much opposed to immediate Confederation, when the question has been before this Council on other occasions, as I have been. But having had an opportunity of seeing the documents which have come from the Imperial Government on the subject, the Executive have arrived at the decision that it is best for this question to go to the country, upon the assumption that the people will ask for Confederation to be carried out on certain terms; therefore, I say, Sir, let it go to the people and settlers of the Colony, and by their verdict let be decided. Earl Granville has sent out a despatch which states, in pretty plain terms, that we were not able to govern ourselves; and there was, perhaps, more truth than poetry in this; for we have had the greatest liberty granted to us, and yet we have not been content. Our Gold Mining Laws have been made by the Mining Board; we have had the most liberal Land Laws; and if we have had a want that the law could satisfy, it has been immediately granted.

Our Officials are an honour to the country. As an Englishman, I am proud of them. Justice has been properly administered in the country; there has been absolute security to life and property; so much so that a man can travel in perfect safety from Cariboo to Victoria, and capital can be safely invested in any part of the Colony.

We have excellent roads, and one of the richest spots on the whole earth, for our Colony, whether as regards mining wealth, or agricultural resources; and yet a petition has emanated from a small body of foreign residents in the City of Victoria, asking to be annexed to the great Republic adjoining. I am well aware, Sir, that, as has been well said by the Hon. Chief Commissioner, the petition was paltry and unworthy of notice, and that those who signed it were insignificant; and I may be allowed to say that we of the Mainland had no feelings in common with them. If it were within reason to contemplate the possibility of the occurrence of such an alternative, it might be worth while to point out its disadvantages, and to show that under it we should not even have representation, as without a certain population, which we have not, we could not elect a member, and we should fall back to what Washington Territory and Oregon were in the days before this City of Victoria was brought forward by the Fleet, to the encouragement and development of the neighbouring