

ber for Victoria, I consider the action he has taken on this question only forces stronger and stronger on my mind, and I believe on the minds of the people, that any matter entrusted to his care will always be dealt with conscientiously, and with due regard to the feelings which he believes his constituents entertain.

Had I had an opportunity of submitting to my constituents the question of Confederation in the light that I now hear, I do believe that their opinions would be in unison with that of the country generally, in favour of Confederation on the terms now proposed, and being of that impression I intend to support the motion of the Hon. Attorney General. I feel assured that the vote which I am about give will meet with the approval of my constituents.

I should feel some hesitation in supporting the motion of the Hon. Attorney General, were it not for the assurance given in His Excellency's Speech, that the action we may now take will not be final until ratified by the general verdict of the people.

I trust I have now stated openly and fairly the position in which I stand, and the course I intend to pursue. I propose, Mr. President, to support Confederation with terms, and I believe that is the stand that will be taken by all the Hon. Members who support Confederation at all.

With regard to the terms proposed for our consideration it will be open for me to discuss them more particularly in Committee; but I may heretofore generally, that I consider they are only what the country is fairly entitled to demand, and I shall support them probably as they stand; and, at the same time, shall be ready to give my vote to any address that may be forwarded to His Excellency, recommending the insertion of other terms that I believe may be advantageous to the Colony.

Mr. President, I must now thank you for the kind attention you have shown me in listening to the few remarks I have felt bound to make; and I have now only to say, that as soon as the terms are decided upon by this Honourable Council, and placed in the hands of His Excellency, I, for one, shall feel perfectly confident that future negotiations will be brought to a successful issue.

I have acted conscientiously in this matter, and I am sure I shall not regret the action I have taken as long as I live.

The Hon. Mr. BELMCKEN, Member for Victoria, in reply, said:—Mr. President, every word that I spoke I am willing to abide by, but I have no wish to be misrepresented. I never said that patriotism was dead in this Colony; and I have not yet advocated that closer Union with another country, to which allusion has been made, as the other issue to come before the people; but a strong feeling does exist in favour of that other Union, and it is just as well that the Dominion Government should know that there are very many people in this Colony who think that Annexation would be far more advantageous than Confederation, and who have no love for Canada. I maintain that the people of this Colony do not desire Confederation; they desire these glittering terms; take away or reduce the terms, and the people don't want Confederation—they will not have it. I have never seen any programme proposed by the Confederation party, and it is certainly to the credit of the Government that it has sent one down [Hear, hear,] which has taken even the Confederationists by surprise. I once saw a scheme brought before this House, which included no Hallway, no Dry Dock, a small Subsidy, and the Dominion Tax, if objectionable as it is acknowledged now to be. It was defeated. The new scheme asks more, and so the country has gained by the delay.

But, Sir, the Hon. Members of this Council have been arguing as though these terms had been obtained—meral castle building. I say they are only propositions. I have never heard any Member say those terms must be had, or no Confederation.

[Hon. Mr. DeCosmos,] stated yesterday, that if certain terms were not granted I should oppose Confederation.]

I expect to see you an opponent of Confederation before long; probably we shall change sides [Laughter]; but until these terms, or terms that will be satisfactory to the country are arranged, I shall not cense my opposition to Confederation. I think it necessary to say a few words in explanation of my position. I do stand here a Member of the Executive Council, whether I gave in my resignation or not, is not for the Hon. Member for Victoria District to

know; I shall not gratify his curiosity; he should recollect, however, that party Government does not exist here.

I have opposed the Government on Confederation. I think it probable that when the terms come back from Canada they will bear but little resemblance to themselves; so until the Country is satisfied I will oppose Confederation. It is sufficient that the ultimate issue now rests with the people themselves, and I hope they will band themselves together to demand these or better terms.

Thus far the question is lost to me in this Council. I am beaten by the Imperial Government, by the Canadian Government, by Lord Granville's despatch, but more than all by the alluring terms and a Government majority,—by no one else. In this Council, the Executive Council has repeated itself. I intend now to offer no factious opposition to the conditions, but it will be my duty to point out what I consider faults, and though I will support the terms as they are, or nearly so, others must go in. I will not attempt to introduce anything which Canada cannot concede; so that on the one hand, Canada may have no excuse to refuse to accept the terms, and on the other, if Confederation does come it may come accompanied with conditions that will be beneficial to the material interests of the Colony. I now bide my time; when the terms as agreed to by Canada return, the people may find them changed, and not so attractive and enticing as they now appear.

In going into the Executive Council, I did so at a loss to myself. [Hear, hear, from the Hon. Attorney General and Chief Commissioner.] After all, the Supreme Power hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth, and hath determined beforehand the bounds of their habitations. We are but instruments in carrying out this design, whatever it may be.

In the position which I now occupy, I have sacrificed no principle, forfeited no pledge, maintained my own honour, have done my duty, and I hope some good, to this Colony.

The Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL said:—Sir, in rising to reply, I have to acknowledge and thank the members of this House for the care and attention which they have bestowed upon this great and momentous question, which I have had the honor to introduce to their notice.

With regard to the very decent, flattering, and personal remarks towards myself, which the Hon. Member for Victoria District (Mr. DeCosmos) has been in the habit of indulging for several years past, the House is so familiar with that gentleman's habit towards all his political opponents in that respect that it has learnt to estimate them at their proper value. I will not, therefore, waste the time of the House by any further comment on them. I will not condescend to notice them [Hear, hear, hear,] but proceed to subjects of more general interest.

I maintain, Sir, that liberal Representative Institutions for this Colony are not dependent on the success of the scheme of Confederation; they are in no way connected with it. Confederation is, however, the easiest and quietest way of getting Responsible Government, should that be found after deliberation to be really desired so ardently by the whole community as some Hon. Members aver. To those who conscientiously believe in Responsible Government, and that the real desire of the Country is for it, or as the Hon. Member for Victoria District says is a "unit" for it, I say thing in your voice with us; these Resolutions will most speedily assure that result you desire. If the people, after careful deliberation and full information on the subject, whether we be confederated with Canada or not, really desire Responsible Government, they will have it. Their voice will be heard on this particular question, as on all others connected with Confederation. That it is the hollowest pretence to assert that Confederation would be stopped till the Governor can send down a scheme for Responsible Government. If we do not get Confederation we shall still have our own Representative Institutions, and once possessed of Representative Institutions under the Imperial Statute of Victoria, the Colony will, if it be such a unit as described, be able at once to get Responsible Government. But I now, I earnestly deprecate, on the part of the Government, the unfair allegation, which one Hon. Member has so improperly insinuated that the Government or Government Officials considered the people of British Columbia unfit for self-government.