

The Capital Debate.

By the return of our Special Reporter from New Westminster, we are enabled to give the remaining portion of the speeches on the Capital Question, and also to report at greater length, the speeches of those gentlemen of which only a synopsis received by telegraph was given before:—

Hon DeCosmos said that he did not wish to dwell at any great length on the subject under discussion. He was prepared to vote at once without further debate. But as the Council seemed disposed to continue the debate, he would make some few allusions to the subject. He had listened with much pleasure to the able speech of his colleague (Dr Helmcken) and to the eloquent speech of the Hon Solicitor General. He concurred with them both, in the main. They had ably stated the claims of Victoria, as the most suitable place for the seat of Government. He differed with them on some points. He did not consider the Capital question as the most important that could engage the attention of the Council. There were other questions, of which he would mention two: The alteration of the present constitution of the Council and the question of Confederation. In either of these the public had a greater and more lasting interest. As the previous speeches in favor of Victoria being made the seat of Government were so full of arguments in support of such a measure, it was needless for him to delay the Council by going over the ground. He would, however, advert to some remarks of the hon gentleman from New Westminster. He (Hon Robson) had made a very able and eloquent speech in favor of retaining the seat of Government at New Westminster. He considered that New Westminster had been well represented by him, and it was a matter of surprise that the people of that place had lately given him (Hon Robson) so much opposition when a candidate for the Council. The whole speech, however, of the hon member for New Westminster appeared destitute of sound arguments. There seemed to be only one thing in his speech, that was, that he rested his case with the Governor—left the whole question to the Governor to settle, irrespective of the wishes of the people the subject, till the constitution was changed.

Hon Robson continued—He might have misapprehended the hon gentleman; but the manner in which he had alluded to the concluding paragraph of the message confirmed him in his statement. The disposal of the seat of Government was a matter of prerogative. Now, whilst he was not disposed to trench on the prerogatives of the Crown, he would say, that Englishmen were everywhere accustomed to see the prerogative exercised in accordance with the well-understood wishes of the people, and not in an arbitrary and despotic manner. He consequently thought that the chief point in the speech of the hon gentleman resting the matter with the Governor, was a weak one, in the face of the petitions before the Council. The hon gentleman had also read some statistics to show the state of agriculture below the mouth of Harrison river. He had done this to show the desirability of keeping the seat of Government at New Westminster. In reply to these statistics, he would say, that a short time past when they were positively read in his presence, and that of others, a distinct denial of the figures was made by an honorable member of the Council familiar with the agriculture of the district. If he (Robson) wished the name of that gentleman, he was prepared to give it. (Name not asked, Rep.) Consequently, there was a balance in the evidence on this point, and until produced additional witnesses, the statistics ought to be disregarded. But taking them at their face, the district of Cowichan alone had as large and as productive a farming population as the lower Fraser. Besides that, there were the extensive properties and wealthy agricultural district extending from Victoria to North Saanich, or to Mechosin. This district was far more populous and wealthy than the lower Fraser consequently the claims of New Westminster fell to the ground on that score. If any arguments were adduced from the state of agriculture, the preponderance would be for Victoria. But he deemed it better to be a good argument on the face of the desire of the majority of the people to locate the seat of Government at Victoria. The hon gentleman had also said that Victoria had been forced up by exceptional circumstances, implying that the late Governor had done something unfair to effect that end during his administration. Now, he denied this statement. He was as familiar with the history of the country as anyone since 1858, and he challenged any one to show that Sir James Douglas had done anything to lose the growth of Victoria at the expense of New Westminster since the hon Collector of Customs went there in June, 1859. Governor Douglas may have introduced measures objectionable to many, but none having the tendency suggested by the hon member for New Westminster. Victoria had grown up by virtue of the enterprise of her people by accidental circumstances; what destroyed the Lower Fraser as a business place was the removal of the town from Langley to Queensboro, or what is now Westminster. This had been done by Colonel Moody, who had been so well flattered today by the hon gentleman. The purchasers of lots in Langley were disgusted with the change; had consequently no confidence in the government, none in the place, and preferred to remain with certainties in Victoria to uncertainties in New Westminster. These were the reasons why Victoria took and kept the start; it was not exceptional circumstances. The hon gentleman had alluded to the capital being fixed here by proclamation, but that was done when the whole population did not extend beyond Yale, except a few stragglers on the bars as high up as Lyton or Lilloet. The country had changed since then. It was then a separate colony. The circumstances were materially altered, and if the people want the capital or seat of government elsewhere it ought to go where it will afford them the greatest convenience. Whilst he was on this topic, however, he would allude to the manner in which the hon gentleman had complimented Sir James Douglas for locating the capital at New Westminster, regardless of his own large private interests in Victoria.

Hon Robson—I didn't compliment him! He hoped the hon gentleman would never attempt to cast any slurs on Victorians, for they were as noble minded and noble hearted a people as ever lived. The hon gentleman then alluded to Capt Richards, Admiral Kingombe, and Colonel Moody recommending New Westminster as a fit place for the capital. If they had done so that is no reason why it should be there if the people did not wish it. He had also said that Victoria would be "snuffed out" if New Westminster remained as the seat of government. He believed no such thing, Victoria would hold the supremacy, seat of government or no seat of government. He had been told by the hon gentleman that New Westminster would be the terminus of the Atlantic and Pacific railroad, and therefore ought to be the seat of government. In reply he would say that no one would be more gratified to see the steam horse rushing in and out of New Westminster than himself, but it was too remote to affect the present question. The hon member for New Westminster in order to undervalue the petitions before the House had stated that Victoria agents had plied the miners with whisky to sign the petition in favor of Victoria. The miners had been slandered by the hon gentleman. From Yale to Cariboo it had been charged against them that they could be bought for a glass of whiskey. Heretofore, the hon gentleman and the present New Westminster, and those high in authority, had misrepresented the opinions of the merchants, packers and miners long enough by denying that they were in favor of union, when the truth was that they were the inhabitants of New Westminster and the great majority of the people of the interior. The attempt was made now to slander them by saying that a glass of whisky would induce a miner to sign a petition, and that with a view of retaining the seat of government in the country with the hon gentleman (Robson) might take a hostile of whiskey in one hand and a petition in the other; and [DeCosmos] would take no whisky, and he would defy him to get on signature for New Westminster, when he would get ten for Victoria. No more noble hearted, daring, enterprising body of men could be found anywhere than the miners of the interior, and yet the hon gentleman would have us infer that they were soot, purchasable with a glass of whisky.

Hon Robson angrily—I never said they were plied with whisky. Hon Robson—I only said that parties in Victoria had charged others with treason. Hon DeCosmos continued—An attempt has been made by the hon gentleman to bolster up his side of the capital question by charging Victoria with being the seat of agitation, that it consequently was not a fit place for the Governor to reside. He had also read remarks in the message and elsewhere deprecating agitation. Now he for one hoped that the sun would never rise on this colony when agitation did not exist. What had made Englishmen—that had placed the British race at the head of the world? What had enabled England to endow mankind with freedom and free discussion but agitation? It had continued for ages—the work of generations. If there was one principle more than another that admitted in his race it was that unceasing activity of mind that resulted in national progression. There was a difference between legitimate agitation and faction. He did not believe that Victoria had ever been swayed by mere faction. Agitation has a party and party has principles; but faction is agitation without principle. If he desired to find faction he could find it without going a thousand miles from New Westminster. That place had only lately become quiet. The hon gentleman had only lately taken up a conservative position. Had not a prize essay been written by a gentleman high in position in the colony which characterized the place as being controlled by a factious clique? Would the hon gentleman deny that? Nearly every one who passed through the place in those days had told him that it regarded it as a hotbed of political fanaticism. It was a place where faction was incessant—a place where faction was substituted for party, passion mistaken for reason, and prejudices for patriotism. And yet the hon gentleman would have us believe that New Westminster was a more fitting place for the residence of the Governor and the seat of Government than Victoria. The hon gentleman had also assailed the Victoria newspapers—had held Victorians responsible for what appeared in them. He (DeCosmos) did not agree with everything in them. The conductors of newspapers there had written whatever they pleased; sometimes in accordance with public sentiment, and sometimes contrary. Victorians could no more be held responsible for everything that appeared in the papers, than the people of New Westminster for what appeared in the *Columbian*. In the main the Victorian papers have represented public sentiment, but not in all cases. But if exceptional newspaper matter was made a charge against Victoria with the object of retaining the seat of Government here, he would find utterances in the *Columbian*, controlled by the hon gentleman, without a parallel in this colony.

Hon Robson objected to naming him in connection with the *Columbian*. Hon DeCosmos continued—A year ago it was said in a newspaper published not a thousand miles from where the Council sits, that "the Governor lives in his harem at Victoria!" Where was the parallel for this? Quicker any such utterance be found in a Victorian paper? Who will say after this that New Westminster is the fittest place for the seat of government? He would not have mentioned these things if the hon gentleman had not travelled out of the way in his zeal to retain the seat of government? Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. The hon gentleman had talked of mobs in Victoria. He would tell him that during nine years, since 1858, since the town was settled, such a thing as a mob was unknown. No one, public or private, had ever been molested. No public officer or court was ever interfered with in the least. The only restraint on a public officer in the discharge of his duty was by such as may be offered by a drunken sailor to a policeman. He could not say the same for New Westminster. It was notorious that a mob in New Westminster had driven a person from his post whilst discharging a public duty, had prevented him, a mob prevented him in New Westminster from carrying out the instructions of government. This the hon gentleman cannot deny. Was this then the place *par excellence* where

the seat of government should be located? He hoped the hon gentleman would never attempt to cast any slurs on Victorians, for they were as noble minded and noble hearted a people as ever lived. The hon gentleman then alluded to Capt Richards, Admiral Kingombe, and Colonel Moody recommending New Westminster as a fit place for the capital. If they had done so that is no reason why it should be there if the people did not wish it. He had also said that Victoria would be "snuffed out" if New Westminster remained as the seat of government. He believed no such thing, Victoria would hold the supremacy, seat of government or no seat of government. He had been told by the hon gentleman that New Westminster would be the terminus of the Atlantic and Pacific railroad, and therefore ought to be the seat of government. In reply he would say that no one would be more gratified to see the steam horse rushing in and out of New Westminster than himself, but it was too remote to affect the present question. The hon member for New Westminster in order to undervalue the petitions before the House had stated that Victoria agents had plied the miners with whisky to sign the petition in favor of Victoria. The miners had been slandered by the hon gentleman. From Yale to Cariboo it had been charged against them that they could be bought for a glass of whiskey. Heretofore, the hon gentleman and the present New Westminster, and those high in authority, had misrepresented the opinions of the merchants, packers and miners long enough by denying that they were in favor of union, when the truth was that they were the inhabitants of New Westminster and the great majority of the people of the interior. The attempt was made now to slander them by saying that a glass of whisky would induce a miner to sign a petition, and that with a view of retaining the seat of government in the country with the hon gentleman (Robson) might take a hostile of whiskey in one hand and a petition in the other; and [DeCosmos] would take no whisky, and he would defy him to get on signature for New Westminster, when he would get ten for Victoria. No more noble hearted, daring, enterprising body of men could be found anywhere than the miners of the interior, and yet the hon gentleman would have us infer that they were soot, purchasable with a glass of whisky.

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using the prerogative in accordance with the clearly expressed opinion of the people. The hon gentleman concluded by supporting the motion of his colleague. Hon Mr. Young feared that at this late hour the House was somewhat wary with the long discussion that had been before it, and endeavor to be as brief as possible, but, considering the importance of the subject, it was impossible that he could sit still and give a silent vote upon the question, for he felt that any man who did so could not support his vote by fact and argument would be a marked man for time to come. The arguments in respect of the relative merits and relative claims of the two places, Victoria and New Westminster, had been nearly exhausted, but he could not view the question in this respect. In his humble opinion he had not to consider the beauty of the site, what would be the top to one place, or the gain to the other, or which people were the most moral or the most honest or the ugliest? The matter here to be considered irrespective of local interest and advantage, and solely as to the bearing it would have upon the future prosperity and stability of the entire colony. He would take up the arguments against the resolution. What were they? So far as he could understand them they rested solely upon one ground, viz., that New Westminster had been established as the capital of British Columbia by Law, and having been so established it was a matter of good faith to keep it there. That the good faith of the Government was pledged to keep the capital at New Westminster, and that it would be a breach of contract to remove it. Now upon what is this argument founded? A Proclamation was issued, February, 1859. But this Proclamation was not a law. It merely declared and made known that the intentions of the Government were in respect of fixing the site of a town at the entrance of the Fraser. And why was such a proceeding necessary? Because the Government had already laid out and sold one town site (Langley) which they now abandoned for another. It therefore became necessary to announce their intentions in some formal manner. Hence this Proclamation. Hon Attorney General—It is a law, though, for all that. Hon Mr. Young—The Hon Attorney General says it is a "law." Is there any recital of the authority under which the law is created? No, none whatever, and the Hon Attorney General knows this as well as I do. We are told New Westminster cannot be moved because a commissioner sent out by the Imperial Government to select its site. But we hear nothing as to the manner in which that commissioner caused the site of Langley to be abandoned (hear, hear). How is it, if the status of New Westminster cannot be interfered with now, that the site was moved from Langley (hear, hear). If the argument be of any value, it must have been of equal value then, and yet we see Langley was abandoned when Imperial interests or grave military considerations rendered it desirable that it should be abandoned. As matters have turned out, it may be a cause of regret that two towns were ever established. It may also be a cause of regret that British Columbia was ever created a separate Colony. But she was created into a separate Colony, and having been so created, as a matter of course, it became necessary to establish a capital or chief town in that separate Colony. In Vancouver Island a capital or chief town was already established, and the mercantile establishments had been formed there. A centre of population had been attracted. Money had been invested, and all these things were so potent that no proclamation was necessary to inform the people of them, and that Victoria was the capital of the colony. But how different was it here. 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