



The Government Gazette Extraordinary.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

VICTORIA, B. C., MARCH, 1870.

Legislative Council.

DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT OF CONFEDERATION WITH CANADA.

WEDNESDAY, 9TH MARCH, 1870.

The Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL CREASE opened the debate on Confederation, as follows:—
Mr. President,—I rise to move that this Council do now resolve itself into Committee of the whole, to take into consideration the terms proposed for the Confederation of the Colony of British Columbia with the Dominion of Canada, in His Excellency's Message to this Council.

In doing so, I am deeply impressed with the momentous character of the discussion into which we are about to enter, the grave importance of a decision by which the fate of this our adopted country of British Columbia must be influenced, for better, for worse, for all time to come. And I earnestly hope that our minds and best energies may be bent to a task which will tax all our patriotism, all our forbearance, all our abnegation of self, and selfish aims, to combine all our individual powers into one great, united effort for the common good.

May He who holds the fate of Nations in the hollow of His hand, and crowns with success, or brings to naught, the counsels of men, guide all our deliberations to such an issue as shall promote the peace, honour, and welfare of our Most Merciful Sovereign, and of this and all other portions of Her extended realm.

And now, Mr. President, I must dwell a few moments on the exact practical import of the motion before the House, and the issue which is involved in the "Aye" or "No" which each Honourable Member will be called upon to cast upon the question which you, Mr. President, will put to the House in that familiar Parliamentary phrase "That I do now leave the Chair?"

This issue is, Confederation or no Confederation? The motion assumes that the principle of Confederation has been already fully adopted by this House—and having so assumed, asks you now to go into Committee of the whole to discuss the Terms on which the Colony would be content to be confederated with the Dominion.

Your question, therefore, Mr. President, "That I do now leave the Chair?" means—Will you refuse

Confederation at any price? or Will you have it on favourable terms? That is the issue before us now.

Now, therefore, is the time for those Honourable Members who, notwithstanding the previous Resolutions of this House so frequently affirming the principle, ["No, No," from Dr. Helmcken] still conscientiously object to the principles of Confederation, to come forward and explain to this Honourable body, and to the country at large, their views,—why they still refuse to aid in the consolidation of British interests on the North American Continent, by the Confederation of this Colony with the Dominion, and the creation of one homogeneous nationality from sea to sea.

Some Honourable gentlemen say "No, No" to my statement that the House has affirmed the principle of Confederation. But I appeal to the Journals of this House, in proof of what I state. I well remember, on the 18th March, 1867, when the "British North America Act, 1867," was being framed by the Imperial Parliament, this Council, anxious to be embraced within the purview of its provisions, passed by an unanimous vote the following Resolution:—

"Resolved, That this Council is of opinion that at this juncture of affairs in British North America, east of the Rocky Mountains, it is very desirable that His Excellency be respectfully requested to take such steps, without delay, as may be deemed by him best adapted to insure the admission of British Columbia into the Confederation on fair and equitable terms, this Council being confident that in advising this step they are expressing the views of the Colonists generally."

And more than that, this Resolution was followed up by a deputation of individual members to Governor Seymour, who at their instance telegraphed to the Secretary of State the purport of that Resolution; and on the 22nd March, the following Message was sent down to the Council on the subject:—

"The Governor has received the Resolution of the Legislative Council, dated the 18th March, in favour of the admission of British Columbia with the proposed Confederation of the Eastern British Colonies of North America. He will place himself in communication on the subject with the Secretary of State, with Viscount Monck, Governor General of Canada, and with Sir Edmund Head, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company."

Whatever construction may be put upon this Resolution by Honourable Members who have said "No, No," one thing is certain, it affirmed in the most distinct manner, by this Council the principle of Confederation, the advisability of our joining at sometime or other the Dominion of Canada. That principle has during every subsequent session, down to the present day, been confirmed, either directly or indirectly, by a specific Resolution of this House ["No, no," from Dr. Helmcken and Mr. Wood]. Thus, on the 28th