

I do not hope to sway a single vote by any remarks that I make. I believe that every Hon. Member can do here, previously prepared, to vote one way or the other, and I do not think any eloquent orators, and much less any feeble words of mine, will cause one of them to change his opinion. But I make a speech in order that a record may be taken of it, and my constituents may be able to see that I was not dumb. I believe, I say, that all Hon. Members came down with their opinions formed, as to whether the amendment of the Hon. and learned Member for Victoria, or the proposition of the Hon. and learned Attorney General, which was so ably put before us, should be carried. I sincerely hope, however, that Hon. Members will join me in voting down the amendment, and in supporting the motion of the Hon. Attorney General. This is, emphatically, the question of the day, and the policy of the Government should meet with a liberal and warm support from every Member of this Council, in order that the question may be fairly brought before the people for final decision.

And here, Sir, with the permission of the House, I will say one word upon the course pursued by the Government. The Executive Council have been actuated by motives of duty only, they have brought down these Resolutions, based on a broad view of the whole subject, and they ask you to make suggestions and additions. [Dr. Hellecken.—"So they don't."] Yes, Sir, I maintain that the Executive do so, and I will maintain it with my last breath. The Executive are prepared to consider, and if possible give effect to, every amendment or suggestion of this Council, provided it does not jeopardize the success of the scheme with the Canadian Government. The final verdict must come from the people, and I can safely maintain that nothing could be fairer.

Among things brought up in the course of this debate, the questions of Tariff and Responsible Government occupy prominent positions. I think the Hon. Member for Victoria has taken right ground, when he said that it was competent for the Dominion Government to alter and amend the tariff so as to protect every vested interest in this Colony. I am no lawyer, but I believe the Canadian Statesmen are sufficiently far-seeing to take care that not an interest in this Colony shall suffer by the Resolutions which we are about passing. With regard to the Dominion Tariff, people thought that the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty was the death-knell of the independence of Canada. I have lived, however, to see her more prosperous by that abrogation. It has taught her to develop her own resources, and to become self-reliant. After she was prevented from going to the United States, by that abrogation, she turned her attention to her own resources, and I believe she is now going to be one of the most progressive nations upon the earth. Undoubtedly, she is determined to progress westward, until she reaches British Columbia and the Pacific; and with all her progressive tendency she will not abate one jot of the loyalty for which, now as ever, she is distinguished.

Now, with regard to Responsible Government. [Hear, hear, from Mr. DeCosmos.] I desire to touch lightly upon this subject in passing, because I have been told that my popularity has suffered some remarks to which I gave utterance in this House upon a previous occasion. Much as I value popularity, I must on this question express my honest and conscientious opinion as an individual. I believe that I was the first to break ground on the question of Responsible Government, in connection with Confederation. I did it, not hastily or thoughtlessly, but on conviction; and I maintain that so long as I do it honestly, I am free to say what I please as an individual, upon this matter. I do not believe, Sir, that, with our present population, with our people scattered over a vast extent of thinly populated country, and having regard to the various conflicting interests consequent on remoteness from the centre, the principle of Responsible Government cannot be satisfactorily applied to this community at present. I believe entirely in the ability and fitness of the Anglo-Saxon race to govern themselves, but I say that the time has not yet arrived under which that particular form of government, generally known as Responsible, can be satisfactorily worked in this Colony. I believe that the scheme forwarded by the Governor for the Representative Government will be the best that, under present circumstances, the Colony can have. The popular members under that system will have a clear majority, and, consequently, the people will have the control of the purse-strings. I do not speak these words as a member of the Executive Council, but as the expression of my own deliberate opinion. Sir, I

was not sent here pledged to any particular platform. My constituents had confidence in me, and were content that I should act on my own judgment. Speaking officially, I say that Responsible Government is not a question of Union. The Act of Union gives us the exclusive right to alter our own laws with respect to everything connected with the internal and local Government of the Province, so long as the Federal Government, if I may so call it, is not endangered. If the majority of the people want Responsible Government after Confederation, neither Governor Musgrave nor any other power on earth can prevent their having it. It is unfounded, unfair, and unjust, on the part of those who are opposed to the Government on the question of Confederation, to endeavour to put any other complexion upon the matter.

With respect, Mr. President, to the remarks about Cabinet Ministers and Executive Councillors, which have fallen from certain Hon. Members, I will only refer to the work that the Executive have laid before this House. From the general approbation which has been tendered, both in this House and on the outside, to the terms of Confederation which have been sent down by the Executive, I think that I am fairly entitled to assume that our labour has not been in vain, and that it has given satisfaction. I thank this Council for the words of encouragement and approbation with which they have accepted these conditions, especially those who have explored them. So one, not even the Hon. Member for Victoria City, can say that it is not the wish of the people that this question should be discussed, and ultimately dealt with by the people.

A change has been preferred by the Hon. Member for Victoria last night, against the Hon. Attorney General and the Hon. Chief Commissioner, to the effect that they had turned their coats and changed sides they had given votes upon Confederation in this House upon a former occasion. If they have changed, I maintain that upon conviction they are not to be blamed for doing so. It was well known that the Hon. gentleman had stated, or at all events I have always so understood it, had a telegram, or some other information from head quarters, more than a year ago, to the effect that the Dominion Government were not prepared to negotiate terms of Confederation with this Colony, until after the settlement of the Red River question, which was then pending with the Hudson Bay Company. The Hon. Attorney General, and the Hon. Chief Commissioner took this same ground last year. They were of opinion that nothing could be done to further Confederation satisfactorily, until the sovereignty of the Dominion was established in the North-West Territory. Both assured me privately that they were in favour of Confederation, and I say that they entered into the consideration of the scheme without mention of pensions being secured to them. Who, I ask, are Confederates? The people most unquestionably; and could we, the people of this Colony, ever have made Confederation a successful issue, unless it had been taken up by Government. His Excellency Governor Musgrave has done nothing but what Prime Ministers do every day, in making this a Government question. On the part of the Government, I cordially invite the assistance, co-operation, and earnest deliberation of all Members of the Council to the scheme—a good one—and after we have done our best with it, we must leave it to the people.

Before I close my remarks, Sir, I must allude to what fell from the Hon. Member for Victoria City, whose opinion and lightest remarks are always received and listened to by this House with the greatest deference and respect, and every wrinkle of whose brow is a notch in the calendar of a well-spent life, for whose character as an individual I have the highest reverence and esteem. I cannot but say, however, that in my opinion, and I believe in the opinion of this House, what the Hon. gentleman did say about another possible issue, was ill-timed, inappropriate, and unparliamentary. And, Sir, I deem it my duty as a Member of the Executive Council to say, that if he did intend to foreshadow the idea that the other union, to which he made ill-timed allusion, could ever be an issue in this Colony, he entirely misrepresented the views of the Executive Council. In this connection I desire to say that, in common with the Chief Commissioner, I feel a great respect for our neighbours of the Great Republic; I honour the country and its institutions; particularly I esteem the people of America in the exercise of national and domestic relations; they are true Anglo-Saxons; they are at this moment lavishing an amount of hospitality on Prince Arthur, which would do honour to