

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 instant, 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 some time 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 April, 1868, a Resolution was passed by this Council confirming the previous Resolution, in the following terms:—

"That this Council, while *confirming the vote of last Session in favour of the general principle* of the desirability of the Union of this Colony with the Dominion of Canada, to accomplish the consolidation of British interests and institutions in North America, are still without sufficient information and experience of the practical working of Confederation in the North American Provinces, to admit of their defining the terms on which such an Union would be advantageous to the local interests of British Columbia."

What is that but a confirmation of the principle? Now let us look to the Journals of 1869. There I see that, on the 17th February, 1869, when, owing to the position of other political issues then current in the Colony, it would have been easy, had it been so desired, to procure an adverse verdict on the principle of Confederation, the House, though invited to do so, refused to go any further than to request Her Majesty's Government (while the North-West Territory was still out of the Dominion) not to press the *present* consummation of Union. The word "present" was an express amendment of my Honourable colleague opposite (Mr. Trutch) and myself, so as to preserve the principle, and bide our time. The House, therefore, I take it, has thoroughly and uniformly committed itself to the principle of Confederation, and may very properly be invited now, setting aside all causes of difference, for the common good, calmly, frankly, and cordially to enter upon a discussion of the terms. But if any Honourable Members think the principle has not been decided, now is the time and now the hour to settle that point (as far as this Session and this present Council is concerned) once and forever. They are bound, in support of their views, to lay before the Council the reasons for the faith that is in them, and to explain why we should not consolidate counsels with the Dominion.

And here, Mr. President, let me say a few words upon the position the Official Members of this Council have occupied throughout the whole of this matter.

Their action has been much misunderstood—I will not say misconstrued—both in England and at Ottawa.

Until the receipt of Earl Granville's Confederation Despatch of 14th August, 1869, they did not feel themselves at liberty to go further in the direction of Confederation than to affirm the general principle of its propriety, carefully abstaining from the expression of opinion on the merits of any particular mode, details, or time of carrying that principle into practical effect.

That, they considered, could most effectually be done by Her Majesty's Government, an Executive peculiarly qualified for the task, this Legislature, and the People of this Colony all acting in concert together, as it is now proposed to do.

I do not at present intend to enter into the details of what particular terms would or would not be most advantageous to this Country in any proposal for Confederation.

That will be a question for the House to settle when, if ever, we get into Committee on the subject; but, inasmuch, as the principle of Confederation means the advisability of consolidating British interests on the North American Continent, it is impossible to lose sight altogether, in a debate upon the principle, of the general advantages to be derived by British Columbia from a participation in that great scheme.

I readily confess that there are drawbacks to material union, such as distance, lack of communication, and, to some extent, want of identity of interest, which can only—but yet which can—be removed, either wholly or in a very great degree, by suitable conditions of Union.

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