

Council, if I did not believe that Confederation would prove advantageous to this Colony, and redound to the benefit of our local interests, I should not support it by my voice. I might as a Government servant vote for it as a Government measure, but I should not be standing here to speak for it and to advocate it as heartily as I do. It is hardly possible to show where the Colony will be benefited by Confederation, without discussing the terms, which is not my present intention to do; but I promise Honourable Members that if these Resolutions get into Committee, I will fully satisfy them of the local advantages that must accrue to the Colony from union with Canada, on the terms proposed in these Resolutions.

I believe, Sir, that many of the objections which have been raised to Confederation have arisen from prejudiced feelings. I have no reason to be prejudiced against or partial to Canada. I believe that Canadians as a people are no better than others, and no worse. I have no ties in Canada, no particular reason for entertaining any feeling of affection for Canada; and if I did not believe that the advance which we make will be met in a becoming spirit, ["Hear, hear,"] then I should be of opinion that Confederation would be nothing more than an union on paper, one not beneficial to this Colony or to Canada. There are statesmen there, Sir, who know that it would be useless to try to beat us down on terms; for what would be the use of Confederation if it afterwards turned out that this Colony was injured, rather than benefited, by it.

The Honourable Junior Member for Victoria asks what guarantee have we that the terms will be carried out. I say at once, Sir, that if the terms are not carried out, if the Canadian Government repudiate their part of the agreement, we shall be equally at liberty to repudiate ours. [Dr. Helmcken—"How?"] We should, I maintain, be at liberty to change; but I, for one, do not approach this subject with any such feeling. ["Hear, hear," from Mr. DeCosmos.] There are always two sides to a bargain, and if the terms which are frankly and honestly proposed are not fairly and honourably dealt with, we should, in my opinion, be at perfect liberty to draw back.

There is, however, one real and practical objection which has always suggested itself to my mind from the first, and that is, that the same measures that apply to the circumstances of Canada, such as tariff, will not apply equally in all respects to this Colony. It will be asked, then, why is there no suggestion as to some alteration or modification of the tariff in the terms. The reason is somewhat similar to the reason for the omission of all mention of Responsible Government. You would find it very difficult to come to any conclusions on this subject in this Council. It is impracticable to define now positively what precise tariff would best suit this country. Some favour a free port. I should be inclined to favour it myself if I believed it practicable. Some, on the other hand, say that we must have protection to agriculture, and that without it we cannot compete with the farmers of Oregon. This point was fully discussed in the Executive Council, but it was decided to omit any conditions for the regulation of Customs dues from these terms; and I do not think that this measure ought to be complicated with the tariff question. I believe that we may safely trust this people with whom we are about to negotiate, to do as much for us in this direction as we could do for ourselves; it will be to their interest to do so. It requires no argument to show that it will be to the interest of Canada, after Confederation, to advance the prosperity of this country. If it be possible to adopt a special tariff to this part of the Colony, and I see no reason why it should not be adopted, I confidently hope to see such a special tariff arranged under Confederation. ["Hear, hear," from Mr. DeCosmos.] Rely upon it, Sir, that there are statesmen in Canada who have a far wider and longer political experience than Members of this House, and who would be able to point out many means of prosperity, for which we are looking with so much anxiety,—powerful minds, before which I feel humbled,—men who I cannot for a moment suppose would fail to see as plainly as we do that Confederation would be of no benefit to Canada unless it redound to the advantage of British Columbia. This requires no argument; it is perfectly plain common sense.

If we are not to have Confederation, what are we to have? What is the proposition of those who oppose Confederation? The people of this Colony have been, for a long time past, asking for a change, and it has been the policy of those who ask for change to throw the blame of everything upon the Government. The policy of the Imperial Government on this matter is clearly expressed in Earl Granville's despatch. He does not say you must confederate, whether you will or not; it is left to the people to decide this question for themselves; but he