

ducing this result, and you will find many other and mightier reasons to account for it. Chiefly, I believe, with the Honourable Attorney-General, that this depression is attributable to the isolated position of the Colony, and to the cold shade thrown over us by the neighbourhood of the Territories of the United States, from whom we can never hope for aid in advancing the interests of this Colony whilst under the British Flag. The desire for some change is urgent, and if we wait for more prosperous times, under which to claim better financial terms, we may realize the old proverb of the "Horse starving whilst the grass is growing." Besides, Sir, on reference to the terms now proposed for the consideration of this House by the Government, it will be found that they are based not altogether on the present condition of the Colony, but somewhat on an anticipated increase of population and prosperity; and I suppose we might wait many years before such a measure of prosperity would accrue to us, as to entitle us to ask better financial terms than are included in these Resolutions.

I believe the time, then, to be opportune, and I think that there is every reason to suppose that the present Government of the Dominion is now desirous and ready to grant us fair and liberal terms.

I believe, Sir, the Canadian Government are favourably disposed towards us, and prepared to go to the utmost of their ability in all reasonable matters to enable us to join the Confederation. The policy and wishes of the Imperial Government, too, in the same direction are clearly enunciated in Earl Granville's despatch; and we are fortunate in having now at the head of the Executive a Governor admirably adapted by his ability and experience to take charge, on our behalf, of negotiations for our union with the Dominion, and to whom the interests of the community may confidently be entrusted.

And that brings me, Sir, to this point: That in its first introduction into this Council, this measure must necessarily be a Government measure. The constitution of this House renders it imperative that the initiatory steps should be taken by the Government, although the final acceptance of the terms will properly rest with the people. The policy of the Imperial Government has been clearly stated: It encourages us to amalgamate our interests with Canada, and points out the advantages to be thus obtained, and nothing that I could add would enunciate more clearly than that document the grounds on which Her Majesty's Government, on behalf of this Colony, favour Confederation.

This leads me to remark on the part that has been taken in reference to this question by the Official Members of this House, especially by the Executive Officers. Our position has been misapprehended—or if not misapprehended, it has been misrepresented—and I feel it my duty to allude to the false impressions which have been spread abroad on this subject. It has been stated that the Official Members have been obstructive to Confederation, with regard to their own official positions and interests. But this is not the fact. On a matter so clearly involving a question of Imperial policy, we were not at liberty to anticipate the views of the Home Government, which have now for the first time been distinctly made public. The Hon. Attorney-General and myself have consistently affirmed the principle of Confederation; and we have always felt that we could safely confide our personal interests to the care of the Imperial Government, whose servants we are. To Her Majesty's Government those interests are entrusted by the Resolutions proposed for your adoption; and, Sir, we are well satisfied that this question as it affects us personally should so depend. We have been right, Sir, I believe, in not anticipating the views of the Imperial Government, for the terms of union now submitted for your adoption prove the wisdom of the course which we have pursued; and in the exercise of caution we have shewn ourselves the truest friends of the Colony, even though we have not appeared to be the most enthusiastic advocates of Confederation.

This, then, is a Government measure, as the Honourable the senior Member for Victoria has told you; and as I hold it is of necessity a Government measure. This scheme is propounded by the Government, as the guardians of the interests of this infant Colony; and I stand here as a member of the Government to support the Resolutions which are now before you, and I sincerely trust that they will be adopted by this Council. But His Excellency has told us that the ultimate acceptance or rejection of the terms of union with Canada, after they have been submitted to the Dominion Government, shall be left to the popular voice of this country.

I will now, Sir, come to the consideration of what Confederation is in the abstract, as I understand it. It is the union and consolidation of British interests in British Territory on this Continent, for the security and advancement of each Province individually, and of the