

Those gentlemen will be able to show that the ultimate importance—nay possible existence—of the Dominion as a Nation may hereafter, in some measure, depend upon her Union with ourselves.

To them, also, I leave the task of dwelling on the healing of old internal feuds of race and language of which Confederation is the only cure.

If we watch the progress of events, they all point to the same end, to the growth of a new universal sentiment of nationality in British America.

It is clear that events all gravitate in that direction.

[Mr. DeCosmos—"In the direction of Confederation or Nationality?"]

I say, Sir, that the current of events points to Confederation and ultimately to Nationality.

Confederation is evidently our ultimate destiny—Our own interests—Canadian aspirations—and Imperial policy, as enunciated in the Secretary of State's Despatch, all point the same way.

We shall, therefore, best consult the real interests of the Colony, the sooner bring on a new era of progress and prosperity in this favoured land, by not delaying to debate and consider over the advisability of the principle itself, but at once to go into Committee of the Whole, and there combine all our energies upon the best scheme to be submitted in the last resort to the decision of the people, for carrying out the principle of Confederation, under God's blessing, successfully into practical effect.

The motion was seconded by the Hon. the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, who was excused from speaking at this stage of the debate on the ground of indisposition, under which he was manifestly suffering.

The Hon. Mr. HELMCKEN said:—The subject of Confederation was introduced by His Excellency the Governor in his Speech, in the following terms:—

"The community is already acquainted with the Despatch which I have recently received from Her Majesty's Secretary of State on this subject; and the careful consideration of it cannot longer be deferred with courtesy to Her Majesty's Government, or advantage to the Colony. I commend it to your earnest thought. For my own part I am convinced that on certain terms, which I believe it would not be difficult to arrange, this Colony may derive substantial benefit from such an Union. But the only manner in which it can be ascertained whether Canada will agree to such arrangements as will suit us, is to propose such as we would be ready to accept. With the assistance of my Council, I have prepared a scheme which I shall cause to be laid before you. Resolutions framed upon that basis will enable me to communicate with the Government of Canada and ascertain whether they will be willing to accede to our propositions.

While the views of Her Majesty's Government have been clearly and forcibly expressed upon this question, I am sure there is no desire to urge the Union, except in accordance with its general acceptance by British subjects in the Colony. I do not, therefore, propose that any terms agreed upon by the Government of Canada should be finally accepted, until ratified by the general verdict of the community, so far as that can be ascertained through another Council, of which the Unofficial Members shall have been re-elected."

Before proceeding to the consideration of the subject, I will reply in a very few words to the speech of the Hon. Attorney-General. The Hon. gentleman laid great stress upon the consolidation of British interests on this coast, but I say, Sir, that however much we are in favour of consolidating British interests, our own interests must come first; Imperial interests can well afford to wait. We are invited to settle this question now and for ever, but I say that we are not called upon to do so; the matter will come before the people after the proposed terms have been submitted to the Dominion Government, and it will very likely happen that, if these terms are rejected and others of a mean nature substituted by the Government of Canada for the consideration of the people of this Colony, other issues may come up at the polls, and amongst them, the question whether there is no other place to which this Colony can go but Canada; whatever may be the result of the present vote, it is impossible to deny the probability of the less being absorbed by the greater; and it cannot be regarded as improbable that ultimately, not only this Colony, but the whole of the Dominion of Canada will be absorbed by the United States. The Hon. Attorney-General has not attempted to prove the advantages which will result from Confederation; he has contented himself with vague assertions of advantages.

The question is only brought down by the Governor in consequence of the Despatch of Lord Granville; all we have to do is to agree to a series of resolutions. It is not pretended