

able at present. The proper way to find out the opinion of the country is for the Governor to give us the enlarged representation promised. Let the question come before the people in a fair way.

I do not desire to go into the general question of terms of Confederation upon this occasion. But I must say, Sir, that these resolutions are not based upon the minds of the people. I protest, Sir, against the people's name being mixed up with those resolutions. I reserve what I have to say on the question of terms, and support the amendment of the Hon. Member for Victoria, in order that the people may have an opportunity of passing their vote upon the question of Confederation.

The Hon. Mr. HUMPHREYS, Member for Lillooet, moved the adjournment of the debate. Withdrawn.

The Hon. Mr. ROBSON, Member for New Westminster, rose and said:—Sir, I had intended to reserve any remarks that I intended to offer until the terms submitted by the Government were under debate in Committee, but I have an objection to the adjournment of the debate at this early hour. I cannot, however, allow certain expressions which have fallen from the Honourable the senior Member for Victoria City to pass unnoticed. I believe the question for us to consider is,—Shall we have Confederation, and upon what terms?

I believe this House is ready to say Aye to the first question, and to go into Committee of the Whole on the second.

I am surprised to find an Honourable Member of this House, who is a Cabinet Minister, expressing his regret that this measure has come down to this Council as a Government measure. I think that the freedom of his remarks contradicts the idea that it is a Government measure, in the sense that Government Members must vote for it.

I was also surprised to hear the Honourable Member, who is a Cabinet Minister, say that Confederation would not be the only issue at the polls, but that there was another place besides Ottawa to which we could go. "I had hoped that all allusion to this matter would have been kept out of this debate; for I say, Sir, that this vague language can have but one meaning, particularly when it is added that the United States will ultimately absorb British Columbia, and Canada as well. The Honourable Member evidently means,—Shall we have Confederation, or accept, as an alternative, Annexation?" As everything that comes from the Honourable Member is entitled to great weight, and especially as he is a Member of the Government, I think we have a right to know whether that is really the issue or not. I had hoped that this debate would have been carried through without the necessity of making use of the word "Annexation"; but as the subject has been dragged in by a Member of the Government, I trust I shall be pardoned for alluding to it. I say, Sir, that if the Government really means to ask whether the people desire Confederation or another union, let us know it. ["No, no," from the Attorney-General and Mr. Trutch.] I am at a loss to understand the position of the Honourable Member for Victoria. I am anxious to have it explained. If he has not represented Cabinet views correctly, this House should be set right.

Waiving these matters, and assuming that the Honourable Member will be able to explain the apparent paradox, I pass on to the objections raised. I find the Honourable Member distinctly setting himself in opposition to Confederation. I will not follow him for the purpose of rebutting so-called arguments against Confederation.

The Honourable gentleman tells us that Confederation is unnecessary, that this Colony is one of the richest spots on the face of the earth, with a climate inferior to no part of the world,—why should it not go on alone? And he tells us that this view of the question is taken by the majority of the people of the Colony. Why, Sir, the Colony has had all this opportunity for fifteen years; and what is the fact? Ten years ago the Colony had a very much larger population than now, and very much larger commerce. Are we, then, under these circumstances, to ask the people to wait and work out their own salvation? But, Sir, in addition, we are told in a State paper that we are not to be allowed to hang on the skirts of Great Britain, like a mendicant's child. I can hardly reconcile the position of manly independence with the position of hanging on to unwilling Imperial skirts. Rather than that, I would ask for union with the Sandwich Islands, or with Hindostan. British Columbia has tried long enough to get on by herself. After fifteen years hard struggle, she finds herself worse off than she was at the beginning. Her progress has been like that of the crab—backward.