

with population like England, where people cannot find work for their hands to do, I could conceive it likely that we might acquire population through Canada, but I cannot see how we can gain population unless a Railway were not only commenced, but in such a state of progress as to be a means and inducement for population to come into the country, and this is not likely, in my opinion, to be the case. I have listened to what my Honourable colleague has said about the agricultural interests, and I entirely coincide with him. Our farmers cannot compete with the farmers of the United States under the Canadian Tariff. In the United States, farmers are able to get everything that they want within their own country, whilst here everything comes from abroad. Until the farmers of this Colony can make everything that they require for their own use, they cannot compete with those of the United States. We can always import American goods, even under a heavy duty, cheaper than Canadian goods, and this, Sir, will put this Province under a different condition as compared with other Provinces.

Let us then suppose this Confederation scheme carried out; we will consider the sacrifice completed, the victim decorated with the conditions which have been graciously accorded by the more powerful contracting party. What will become of our farmers? I refer more particularly to the farmers of the Island and of the Lower Fraser. This class I look upon as the bone and sinew of the country. They, Sir, I say, will be driven out of their own market by the cheaper productions of the States. And, I would ask, what industry it is supposed will take the place of agriculture? Moreover, Sir, I would ask if we be confederated upon these terms, what guarantee has the Colony that the terms will be carried out? We all know that when compacts are made between a large and a small power, the larger can break the treaty with impunity when an emergency arises. Would Canada hesitate, in the event of having to repel a Fenian invasion, to abandon the Railway? We have no guarantee that the Dominion will carry out the terms to which her Statesmen may agree. We may be abandoned at any time. The benefits of the larger Provinces of Canada will always take precedence of those of British Columbia, whose representatives will be in a small minority. And I would never consent to Confederation on any terms without an Imperial guarantee that the terms would be observed and kept. History tells us that in a compact between a larger and smaller country, the smaller must go to the wall.

I sum up my objections to Confederation in a few words:

At the present time, I think that any terms will be inimical to this Colony, on account of our distance from Canada; on account of the smallness of our population, for we never can have an equal vote in the Dominion Parliament with other Provinces; on account of the danger of our farming interests being killed and crushed; and on account of the unsettled state of the intervening territory; and even if the North-West Territory were confederated, what advantage would it be to us?

Our Confederation would be a source of weakness to Canada, and to ourselves.

We are so far separated from Canada, that she can only communicate with us by telegraph through the United States, and by ships round the southern extremity of the American Continent.

We are told that Confederation is an Imperial necessity. We have nothing to do with this. We must look to our own interests. Confederation is a political idea; it may be part of the Imperial policy, but what of that? We are told that Great Britain desires to get rid of all her Colonies.

These are serious matters for consideration, and this question ought not to be dealt with as a party measure. I offer these remarks in the hope that any legislation which may result from this debate, after it has received popular sanction, may be enduring and of advantage to the Colony.

The Hon. Mr. RING, Member for Nanaimo, said:—Mr. President, I rise to second the amendment of the Hon. Member for Victoria, and in doing so I abstain from dealing with the merits of the question. It appears that the Governor wishes to have a popular vote upon the question of Confederation. I say, then, let there be an extended suffrage given, so that the voice of the people may be heard in this House. I hope that the people will have the opportunity of expressing their opinion, Aye or No, whether they will have Confederation. The people should not be bound by what occurs in a Council constituted as this is.

I say, Sir, that the material question for decision is not that of terms. The Government, if this amendment is carried, will have the opportunity of hearing the voice of the people. On behalf of my constituents, I say they do not want Confederation; they believe that it is undesir-