

But, Sir, the Hon. Members of this Council have been arguing as though these terms had been obtained—erial castle building. I say they are only propositions. I have not heard one Member say those terms must be had, or no Confederation.

[Hon. Mr. DeCosmos,—I stated yesterday, that if certain terms were not granted I should oppose Confederation.]

I expect to see you an opponent of Confederation before long; probably we shall change sides [Laughter]; but until these terms, or terms that will be satisfactory to the country, are arranged I shall not cease my opposition to Confederation. I think it necessary to say a few words in explanation of my position. I do stand here a Member of the Executive Council. Whether I gave in my resignation or not, is not for the Hon. Member for Victoria District to know; I shall not gratify his curiosity; he should recollect, however, that party Government does not exist here.

I have opposed the Government on Confederation. I think it probable that when the terms come back from Canada they will bear but little resemblance to themselves; so until the country is satisfied I will oppose Confederation. It is sufficient that the ultimate issue now rests with the people themselves; and I hope they will band themselves together to demand these or better terms.

Thus far the question is lost to me in this Council. I am beaten by the Imperial Government, by the Canadian Government, by Lord Granville's despatch, but more than all by the alluring terms and a Government majority,—by no one else. In this Council, the Executive Council has repeated itself. I intend now to offer no factious opposition to the conditions, but it will be my duty to point out what I consider faults, and though I will support the terms as they are, or nearly so, others must go in. I will not attempt to introduce anything which Canada cannot concede; so that on the one hand, Canada may have no excuse to refuse to accept the terms, and on the other, if Confederation does come it may come accompanied with conditions that will be beneficial to the material interests of the Colony. I now bide my time; when the terms as agreed to by Canada return, the people may find them changed, and not so attractive and enticing as they now appear.

In going into the Executive Council, I did so at a loss to myself. [Hear, hear, from the Hons. Attorney-General and Chief Commissioner.]

After all, the Supreme Power hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth, and hath determined beforehand the bounds of their habitations. We are but instruments in carrying out this design, whatever it may be.

In the position which I now occupy, I have sacrificed no principle, forfeited no pledge, maintained my own honour, have done my duty, and I hope some good, to this Colony.

The Hon. ATTORNEY-GENERAL said:—Sir, in rising to reply, I have to acknowledge and thank the members of this House for the care and attention which they have bestowed upon this great and momentous question, which I have had the honour to introduce to their notice.

With regard to the very decent, flattering, and personal remarks towards myself, in which the Hon. Member for Victoria District (Mr. DeCosmos) has been in the habit of indulging for several years past, the House is so familiar with that gentleman's habit towards all his political opponents in that respect that it has learnt to estimate them at their proper value. I will not, therefore, waste the time of the House by any further comment on them. I will not condescend to notice them [Hear, hear, hear, hear,] but proceed to subjects of more general interest.

I maintain, Sir, that liberal Representative Institutions for this Colony are not dependent on the success of the scheme of Confederation; they are in no way connected with it. Confederation is, however, the easiest and quietest way of getting Responsible Government, should that be found after deliberation to be really desired so ardently by the whole community as some Hon. Members aver. To those who conscientiously believe in Responsible Government, and that the real desire of the country is for it, or as the Hon. Member for Victoria District says is a "unit" for it, I say fling in your voice with us; these Resolutions will most speedily assure the result you desire. If the people, after careful deliberation and full information on the subject, whether we be confederated with Canada or not, really desire Responsible Government, they will have it. Their voice will be heard on this particular question, as on all others connected with Confederation. But it is the hollowest pretence to assert that Confederation