

humble opinion to those around me in favour of the consideration of this question in Committee of the Whole. I shall support the general principle of Confederation [Hear, hear], as I have always done, if we get to the discussion of the terms proposed.

First, Sir, let me allude to some of the statements of the Honourable the Attorney-General (Mr. Crease) and the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works (Mr. Trutch), and to the Honourable Executive Member for Victoria City (Mr. Helmcken). Sir, I know something about the history of Confederation. Up to the opening of this Session Confederation has been a subject of agitation. It may properly be divided into several heads: Firstly, agitation; secondly, negotiation; thirdly, inauguration; and fourthly, I hope, successful operation. Now, Sir, it is apparent that every act of mine in reference to Confederation, up to the time it was announced in Earl Granville's despatch, up to the time His Excellency the Governor sent down his Message—every act of mine was in the line of agitation. It was with the view to bring about the consideration of terms with the Dominion Government; to hear what they would do; to bring the question before the people, and to canvass its defects and advantages, that I for one have agitated the question. In doing so I have come in for blows from open enemies and treason from false political friends. Sir, the era of agitation has now passed, and we advance to the era of negotiation.

When I heard the Hon. Attorney-General, yesterday, invoking High Heaven; and when I heard him explaining the position of Official Members upon this question; when I heard him state that he was always in favour of Confederation, there flashed across my mind one of the proverbs of Solomon, which I cannot refrain from repeating: "Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth and wipeth her mouth and saith I have done no wickedness." [Laughter.] Sir, I respect any Honourable Member who will, if he sees reason to change his opinion, come down and frankly tell the honest truth; but when an Honourable Member tries to make political capital out of other men's labour, I confess I do not respect him. On the contrary, such men as the latter, when officers of a Government, remind me of the remark of a celebrated French philosopher, who said: "That in all the mysterious ways of Providence there is nothing so inscrutable as his purpose in committing the destiny of nations to such creatures as these." [Laughter.]

There are men in this Colony entitled to some honour; some men who are entitled to praise for having brought Confederation to its present stage; but they are not the Honourable gentleman, the Minister of Justice, nor the Honourable the Chief Commissioner. [Hear, hear.]

Is Earl Granville entitled to the credit of bringing this matter forward? Is Governor Musgrave, or his Cabinet, or the Officials? No, Sir, I should be doing wrong if I permitted it to be supposed that the credit was due to any one of them. I have assisted to make history, and this is a page of it. Let it go forth to the world that the people of this country have made Confederation the important question that it is to-day.

The Hon. Chief Commissioner, whom we have heard with so much pleasure to-day, made an allusion to me. He said that when I brought this matter before the Council in 1868, that the Executive Council opposed Confederation then, and the present terms proved their wisdom in delaying the question at that time. On that occasion my object was only agitation to open negotiations. But, Sir, what did I hear at that time? "You pension the officials and we will all vote for Confederation," and I think I could mention another Executive Councillor who said: "Do you think we are such fools as to vote for Confederation without being provided for?" That was the kind of wisdom in vogue in 1868. Sir, I again object to Hon. Members taking credit where no credit is due. [Hear, hear.]

Let us turn now to the Honourable Member for Victoria City (Dr. Helmcken), once a warm and generous friend to Confederation; and what has been the result of his opposition? Impotence. He was impotent to retard the question. He was impotent to advance it. By impotent, I mean powerless. He was impotent to stem the course of events. He hung out the banner of Anti-Confederation in Victoria, and won his seat by crying "down with Confederation." Before he contested the seat with me, I told him that the Canadian Government would not negotiate until the North-West Territory question was settled. Yet the Hon. Member for Victoria City charged me with backing down from Confederation.

The Hon. Member for New Westminster, also, denounced me in his elegant English in the *Columbian* as giving up the cause of Confederation. But, Sir, why did I say that the Canadian Government would not enter into negotiations with us? It was because I had in