

She might make progress, but, unfortunately, her form of Government has rendered progress impossible. I believe that the illiberal form of Government has had much to do with keeping away population—with *driving* away population,—and with destroying the spirit of manly enterprise of those who are here. Apart from its being the policy of the British Government to unite all the British American Colonies in one great Confederation, if we persist in remaining alone we shall be told by the Imperial Government that we are not fit for liberal institutions, and not prepared for self-government. We should get no amelioration. Downing Street officials would say that we are not fit for Responsible Government, and that we ought to confederate.

There is no difficulty in showing that Confederation will be beneficial to British Columbia; that is to say, Confederation on proper terms. I do not say that Confederation would be entirely satisfactory on the terms proposed in the Government programme. The terms, although excellent, do not go far enough; but I can hardly understand any man taking the position that under those terms, even as they are, Confederation would not be beneficial. The public works proposed would make the population of the Colony double what it is now. No man can conceal from himself, looking at the question dispassionately, that the construction of the Railway alone would bring a very great increase to our labouring and productive population.

We are told that the tariff of the Dominion would crush our farming and industrial interests. Why, Sir, that tariff is a little more than a third lighter than ours, and would relieve us of that one-third of present taxation; and our Customs duties, it must be borne in mind, are taken by the Dominion Government. Although, in its present form, the tariff would be ill-adapted to some of our local interests which we desire to protect, it should be remembered that the Canadian tariff is now under revision, as regards the free admission of American productions; and under Confederation we shall in all probability have a treaty of reciprocity; or, if not, certainly a revised tariff which would meet American productions, which now find a free market in the Dominion, with a protective duty. The argument of the Honourable Member with regard to tariff and farming interests is then swept away by that fact. [Dr. Helmcken—"Is it a fact?"]

This subject is one of the greatest importance. All other questions are overshadowed by it. It is the most important one ever debated on the British Pacific. It has been justly said it is a step for life, for better for worse. The question must be approached in a fair spirit, and in dealing with it we ought to be thoroughly honest with ourselves; and in dealing with facts, I hope that allowance will be made for what has been said, for I believe that much of the present opposition arises out of ancient prejudices. Why do we find an Honourable gentleman who has grown grey in the service of his country, and for whom we have respect amounting to veneration, talking of centralization of every interest under Confederation at Ottawa? Does the union of Washington Territory and Oregon with other States of the Great Republic mean centralization at Washington? [Dr. Helmcken—"Yes."]

Then, Sir, where would be the advantage of union in that other direction that has been alluded to? Certain persons are fond of talking about the advantages of Annexation; all arguments in its favour can be brought with redoubled force in favour of Confederation. British Columbia as a member of the Union would have a Pacific frontage, but only in common with other countries of the Union. As a part of the Dominion she would have more, for she would be the only outlet of the British Confederacy on the Pacific Coast.

Exception has been taken by the Honourable gentleman to the fishery laws of the Dominion; and it is said that the whales and salmon will cry out for Confederation to protect them. If the Canadian fishery laws were enforced in their present form, it is possible that the salmon might escape, and the whales might spout with impunity; but we have a right to expect that the Dominion Parliament will adapt these laws to this Colony, on the representations of the Members from this Province. It would be absurd to suppose that, if the fishery laws of the Dominion were inimical to British Columbia, they would be enforced; the nature of the union will be such as to make the interests of this part of the Dominion identical with other parts. We cannot suppose that the Dominion Parliament would seek to injure this Province. A man would not wantonly injure the smallest member of his body. He could not do so without feeling it. No man can neglect or injure any member of his own body with impunity. If one member, however humble, suffers, all the members will suffer with it. Community of interest is the best guarantee for fair play to every section. The Dominion is made up of Provinces, and the prosperity of the Dominion means the prosperity of the Provinces of which it is composed.