

THURSDAY, 10TH MARCH, 1870.

The debate was resumed by the Hon. MR. TRUTCH, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, who said:—Mr. President, in rising to renew the debate on the question which has been brought before the House by the Honourable the Attorney-General, I desire to express my regret that I was prevented yesterday, by indisposition, from speaking in support of the motion which I had the honour to second, because I fear that by the delay I may have laid myself open to the charge of waiting to reply to objections that might be urged against this motion, instead of at once supporting it upon positive and substantial grounds, as I hold it to be incumbent on those to do who advocate so important a measure. I must also ask the indulgence of the House if I find it necessary to follow the Honourable the Attorney-General over ground already so fully and ably occupied by him, as, rather than leave out anything in the history of this question which is pertinent to my argument, I will run the risk of laying myself open to the charge of plagiarism. In the first place, then, I must ask you, Sir, to allow me to trace the history of Confederation in this Council, as shewn in the debates which have taken place on the subject. You will find, Sir, that this subject was first introduced into this Council on the 29th of March, 1867, when a Resolution in favour of the abstract principle of the Confederation of the British Provinces in North America, and expressing the desire that this Colony should be allowed the opportunity of entering the Dominion upon fair and equitable terms, at some future time, was unanimously agreed to. I do not quite take the view of the Honourable the Attorney-General with respect to the discussions that have taken place on this question; for, Sir, I think that the question is now for the first time brought before this House and the country in a practical shape, for a full and deliberate expression of opinion. The vote which was taken in 1867, according to my understanding of it at that time, went no further than to express a desire on the part of the Colony to be confederated with Canada, when a favourable occasion should arrive, and the result of that vote was, I believe, the insertion of the clause in the "British North America Act," on which the measure we are now discussing is based. Again, in 1868, when the Honourable Member for District No. 2 introduced a series of Resolutions setting forth terms on which this Colony should be united with Canada, the sense of the House, as then expressed, was that we were not possessed of sufficient information to enable us to come to any practical resolution on the subject; and, Sir, when the terms and conditions then proposed for the consideration of the House are compared with those now submitted for your adoption, no words are needed to show that the conclusion then arrived at was judicious.

Last year, again, the subject was introduced by the Hon. Dr. Davie, to a reluctant House. We all felt that there were circumstances which rendered its discussion then in this Council inexpedient, although the question of Confederation was even then occupying public attention to an absorbing extent, and had in fact been the test question at the elections a short time previously in the Districts in this part of the Colony. But certain remarks of the Honourable Member for Cariboo, in reference to the position of Government Members on this question, compelled the expression of the views of the Council on the subject at that time, in a Resolution pointing out the practical impossibility of the union of this Colony with Canada, until the North-West Territory was amalgamated with the Dominion.

But now circumstances are entirely changed. The Hudson Bay Company's rights in that region, known as the North-West Territory, are determined by purchase, and that country is practically part of the Dominion of Canada; for the temporary opposition from a certain class of the population of the Red River Settlement, to the assumption of the Government by the Canadian authorities, is passing away, if not by the present moment virtually at an end. And treating that ebullition of feeling resulting from misapprehension of the real intention of the Dominion Government as passed away, I regard it as an established fact that, as stated in Lord Granville's despatch, our boundaries are now conterminous with those of Canada.

But not only is Union with Canada now practicable, but, Sir, I regard the present as a most opportune moment for its consummation. I entirely agree with Honourable Members who say that this Colony requires a change. In its present depressed state, the Colony needs assistance and fresh impetus. There are many causes which combine to contribute to the depression now observable in the country. It has been attributed to the present form of Government. Take that as one cause, if you please; but, Sir, I believe it has had very little effect, if any, in pro-