

were encountered, and many mistakes characterized the earlier working of Responsible Government in that fine Colony; but it would be most unfair to charge all these to the possession of such institutions. Nay, most of them had their origin in a different political system. As for Jamaica, Hon. gentlemen must be aware that it never possessed Responsible Government. A mixed representative system it had; and the chief cause of failure was the absence of responsibility. It was just because those who administered the affairs of that unfortunate Colony were not responsible to the people that the opposition, led by the ill-fated Gordon—a man of unquestionable ability, although, perhaps, somewhat deficient in judgment—was induced finally to assume the extreme attitude which resulted so fatally. The Hon. and learned Attorney-General made an effort, not altogether warranted by facts, to force the advocates of Responsible Government into a false and disadvantageous position, in relation to the Government programme; but Hon. gentlemen will recollect how anxious I was, at the beginning of this debate, to meet the views and adopt the suggestions of that Hon. and learned gentleman, in respect to the particular time and mode of approaching this question. My desire to give the Government a general and strong support upon the great question of Confederation is no secret in this House; and I think I can speak with equal confidence in regard to the views and intentions of my Hon. friend on my left (the Member for Yale). But enough has already been said upon this point; and I have only to add that I utterly refuse to occupy the position in which the Hon. and learned Attorney-General appears desirous of placing me. That Hon. gentleman was content to give the same answer to the main objection as that given all round the Government end of the table, viz., that the Organic Act provides the necessary and ready means of obtaining what we seek; and he further tells us that, inasmuch as Responsible Government relieves Governors of responsibility, a Governor would naturally be ready to make the concession. Such, however, is not the accustomed working of human nature. Such is not the lesson of history. The ruler hugs power as the miser does his gold, nor parts with it only as it is extorted piecemeal by the people. I am charged with having used threats—threats of blood! Now, Sir, I must plead “not guilty” to this charge. While carefully avoiding everything in the nature of threat and prediction, I asked the Government to read carefully those lessons written in blood around us, and implored them to take warning from the errors and profit by the successes of others. We were told by the Hon. and learned Attorney-General that the Governor is powerless to grant what the Resolution asks; but might not the same objection be raised to almost every recommendation passed in connection with Confederation? His Excellency in asking Her Majesty’s Government for power to give us a new Constitution. The Resolution merely suggests a more liberal Constitution than His Excellency proposes. There is, therefore, no weight in this objection. The Honourable gentleman next tells us that the Resolution implies want of confidence in the Canadian Government; that they will not listen to the cry of the people for Responsible Government. Now, the Hon. gentleman must be aware that Canada can only listen to our cry when it is heard in the particular form prescribed by the Constitution. The people can only cry through the Government if it is proposed to give them under the Constitution foreshadowed in His Excellency’s opening message; and I have already endeavoured to point out the probability that the new Government might refuse to utter a cry in that direction at the desire of the people. There is no such expression of want of confidence in the resolution. The Canadian Government could not interfere—would have no power to give us Responsible Government—until asked by our Local Government to do so. Such objections I must, therefore, regard as frivolous, and utterly unworthy of the Hon. and learned Attorney-General. The Hon. Chief Commissioner followed with his accustomed ability, but; I venture to think, without his usual discretion. That Hon. gentleman set out by telling us that he quite understood it to be necessary for certain members, in order to be consistent with pen and speech outside of this House, to bring forward this subject; that it was a logical necessity, inexorable fate. Now, Sir, I cannot see into that Hon. gentleman’s heart, any more than I can into the mysterious Executive Chamber. I will not, therefore, permit myself to impute motives to that Hon. gentleman in his opposition to Responsible Government; but he must permit me to be the best judge of those motives which have impelled me, with some degree of reluctance, to take a stand in opposition to the Government upon this question. It may appear necessary, in order to be consistent with word and pen, that I should advocate in this House great principles which I have advocated elsewhere; but it may be permitted me to say that, whether here or elsewhere, I advocate Responsible Government under Confederation,