

Shortly after this petition had been dispatched to Kootenay, as just mentioned, I wrote to my constituents, requesting them to advise me fully with regard to their wants and wishes; and, in reply, I received a communication setting forth what they specially desired that I should assist in obtaining for them, but not one word on the subject of Confederation.

I have now before me the terms submitted by His Excellency the Governor at the opening of this Council, as well as the paragraph in His Excellency's Speech referring to those terms; and I must say that had I resided as near my constituents as the Honourable Members for Victoria and Nanaimo Cities do to theirs, I should most certainly have sought an opportunity of meeting them and obtaining some expression of their opinions on the now altered position of this question. But as the remoteness of my District has rendered such a course impossible, it is only left for me to exercise my own judgment.

I wish to cast no reflections on the Hon. Members referred to, and with regard to the Hon. senior Member for Victoria, I consider the action he has taken on this question only forces stronger and stronger on my mind, and I believe on the minds of the people, that any matter entrusted to his care will always be dealt with conscientiously, and with due regard to the feelings which he believes his constituents entertain.

Had I had an opportunity of submitting to my constituents the question of Confederation in the light that it now bears, I do believe that their opinions would be in unison with that of the country generally, in favour of Confederation on the terms now proposed, and being of that impression I intend to support the motion of the Hon. Attorney-General. I feel assured that the vote which I am about to give will meet with the approval of my constituents.

I should feel some hesitation in supporting the motion of the Hon. Attorney-General, were it not for the assurance given in His Excellency's Speech, that the action we may now take will not be final until ratified by the general verdict of the people.

I trust I have now stated openly and fairly the position in which I stand, and the course I intend to pursue. I propose, Mr. President, to support Confederation with terms, and I believe that is the stand that will be taken by all the Hon. Members who support Confederation at all.

With regard to the terms proposed for our consideration, it will be open for me to discuss them more particularly in Committee; but I may here state generally, that I consider they are only what the country is fairly entitled to demand, and I shall support them probably as they stand; and, at the same time, shall be ready to give my vote to any address that may be forwarded to His Excellency, recommending the insertion of other terms that I believe may be advantageous to the Colony.

Mr. President, I must now thank you for the kind attention you have shewn me in listening to the few remarks I have felt bound to make; and I have now only to say, that as soon as the terms are decided upon by this Honourable Council, and placed in the hands of His Excellency, I, for one, shall feel perfectly confident that future negotiations will be brought to a successful issue.

I have acted conscientiously in this matter, and I am sure I shall not regret the action I have taken as long as I live.

The Hon. Mr. HELMCKEN, Member for Victoria, in reply, said:—Mr. President, every word that I spoke I am willing to abide by, but I have no wish to be misrepresented. I never said that patriotism was dead in this Colony; and I have not yet advocated that closer union with another country, to which allusion has been made, as the other issue to come before the people; but a strong feeling does exist in favour of that other union, and it is just as well that the Dominion Government should know that there are very many people in this Colony who think that Annexation would be far more advantageous than Confederation, and who have no love for Canada. I maintain that the people of this Colony do not desire Confederation; they desire these glittering terms; take away or reduce the terms, and the people don't want Confederation—will not have it. I have never seen any programme proposed by the Confederation party, and it is certainly to the credit of the Government that it has sent one down [hear, hear,] which has taken even the Confederationists by surprise. I once saw a scheme brought before this House, which included no Railway, no Dry Dock, a small Subsidy, and the Dominion Tariff, objectionable as it is acknowledged now to be. It was defeated. The new scheme asks more, and so the country has gained by the delay.