

Hon. Mr. HUMPHREYS—Out of deference to the amendment offered by the Hon. Member for New Westminster (Mr. Robson), I ask the leave of the House to withdraw my motion, so that the amendment, the latter part of which I like better than my own, may stand.

Hon. ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I regret very much that a discussion so inapposite, so totally unnecessary, should have been forced on by the other side of the House at a time so inopportune. I am glad that the Hon. Member for Lillooet has withdrawn his motion; it leaves the Council to deal with the amendment of the Hon. Member for New Westminster; and I deeply regret that the Hon. gentleman did not accept the invitation to give up a special field day to the discussion of Responsible Government, as suggested by myself after we had passed clause 15 of the Terms. This, I stated at the time, the House was quite competent to do. Then Members on this side of the House might have freely joined in the discussion; perhaps some might have supported the principle. But no! The Hon. proposer of the amendment, with the light of battle in his eye, had refused every suggestion; and afterwards, when he began to find out his mistake, it was too late; there was nothing for it but to go on. The melee had begun; the glove is down; the visors are closed, and the lists barred. It cannot be put off. If the Hon. Member for New Westminster had been opposed to Responsible Government, he could not have devised a course more adapted, than mixing up the question with terms, for shelving Responsible Government for the session. One point which requires special notice and correction is, that nearly all speakers during the debate seem to think that the Governor alone could grant any alteration of Constitution that may be required, merely for the asking; but this is a mistake; he cannot. The Constitution can only be changed by the same power that created it—the Imperial Parliament and the Queen in Council. The Governor can only recommend it; it is for the Home Government to say what that change shall be. As to the able speech of the Hon. Member for New Westminster, the eloquence of which I was forced to applaud in spite of myself, it was an argument based upon fallacious premises throughout, asserting that we should only have a representative majority of one, which could only lead to a false conclusion; and I take it that the Hon. Member is in favour of Responsible Government as a *sine qua non*, else why all this tall talking of blood, wading knee deep in blood? Why this encouragement of rebellion in defence of our rights, and the like? And yet I understood the Hon. Member for New Westminster to say that he does not make Responsible Government a *sine qua non* for Confederation.

Hon. Mr. ROBSON—I said nothing of the kind. I do not choose to state whether or not I would make it a *sine qua non*.

Hon. ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have an accurate recollection, and have a note of it, and I ask the Hon. Member to state whether he will make it a *sine qua non*.

Hon. CHIEF COMMISSIONER—I understood the Hon. Member for New Westminster to say that Confederation would not be satisfactory to the Colony without Responsible Government, but he would not pledge himself to make it a *sine qua non*.

Hon. Mr. ROBSON—I said further that I did not pledge myself that the people would not.

Hon. ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I then understand that the Hon. Member for New Westminster puts it not as a *sine qua non*.

Hon. Mr. ROBSON—No, Mr. Chairman, I never said that. I will not be placed in such a position. I refuse to have such an issue forced upon us.

Hon. ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Either the Hon. Member puts it one way or the other; one of two opposites must be true. I can quite understand and must prefer the direct and simple issue of the Hon. Member for Victoria District, for immediate Responsible Government in any case, either with or without Confederation. I say, Sir, that the question is in no way connected with the discussion of this clause. I said that Responsible Government ought not to be considered until after the Council is reconstituted with an increased representation, as shadowed forth in His Excellency's speech. I have said that we shall have the sole control of the matter in our own hands if we have Confederation. I say we, because I identify myself with this country. I speak on this matter as a citizen. I say that if we have Confederation we shall have an opportunity of getting Responsible Government. If we have not Confederation then we shall have increased representation, and under that we can get Responsible Government if the country as a unit goes for it. Honourable Members are complicating this question. I cannot imagine that it was the intention of the Honourable Member for New Westminster to complicate the question. I have too much respect for him to allow myself to suppose so; it is