

My Hon. friend on my right (Mr. Wood), who certainly has placed the objections and arguments against Confederation forcibly before the House, says that Confederation means an union of equal States self-governed, and is equivalent to absorption. I doubt whether this is historically correct. But, Sir, whether that be so or not is beside the question, for the Resolutions which are before us are in fact Resolutions for the *Union* of this Colony with Canada. *Union* is the term used in the Organic Act, and the term Confederation never once occurs. It is *Union* we are seeking, not Confederation. The American States are States of the *Union*, not of the *Confederation*, and it has been conclusively shown that in that country the separate States are not absorbed, although united.

And again, Sir, we were told that we are selling our independence, and transferring our loyalty. Not a bit of it. If the people of this Colony pass the measure, surely their verdict is not one of slavery, unless they be slaves themselves, and yet they are free to act. This measure will not pass unless the people of this Colony are willing that it should, and declare unmistakably that it is for their benefit. Whatever I may individually think, I shall bow to the free popular decision, and be prepared to believe that the *vox populi* is the *vox dei*. In so great a measure, I trust the people may be guided to a right conclusion.

As to loyalty, I need add no more than has already been said so forcibly by the Hon. Attorney-General and the Hon. Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works. Hemmed in to the north and south by a people owing a different allegiance to our own; forced back to the sea to west, the only direction in which loyal hearts can turn is to the rising people of the east, who ask us to unite in a friendly spirit with them, to form a great Nation. May that union prove a source of strength to us and them.

I shall give to the Government measure a hearty support, reserving, however, to myself the right of suggesting any amendment or improvements, or of supporting any recommendations which may appear to me to be necessary or desirable.

From the position which I hold in this Council as an officer of the Government, I have deemed it right to make this statement of the course which I propose to follow in this great and momentous subject, and I maintain it to be perfectly conscientious and perfectly consistent with my previous conduct.

The Hon. Mr. DEWDNEY, Member for Kootenay, rose and said:—Mr. President, I have purposely waited until this late stage of the debate in order to avail myself of the opportunity of listening to the arguments that have been adduced both for and against the scheme of Confederation as sent down for our consideration by His Excellency the Governor, and particularly for the reason that I have not been in a position (from my long absence in the Upper Country) of making myself acquainted with the subject as I should like to have done.

As the debate progressed, I felt more and more that I had been right in so doing, as I have now the benefit of the well-considered opinions and arguments of so many Honourable Members; and upon these able arguments I have in a great measure been guided in coming to the conclusion which I propose to explain.

And now, Mr. President, I think it is incumbent on me to state the course I intend to take with regard to the subject.

I feel I have a most responsible duty to perform, not only to my constituents, but to myself and the country generally.

With regard to my constituents, I feel that I am placed in a rather peculiar position, and I regret that I have had no opportunity of communicating with them since Confederation has assumed the phase it now does.

You are aware, I presume, Mr. President, that I was selected, unsolicited on my part, to represent the Kootenay District in this Council. At that election Confederation was made the test question, and I can assure you that at that time the feeling of the majority of my constituents was opposed to Confederation with the Dominion of Canada.

At a subsequent period—only a few months ago—a petition, concocted in this city, was dispatched to Kootenay for the purpose of obtaining signatures in favour of Confederation. It was, however, unfavourably received, the party circulating it was roughly handled, and the petition returned a blank. I mention this to shew you that up to a late period my constituents held the same views with regard to Confederation that they did some eighteen months ago.