

Hon. MR. HELMCKEN—She has agricultural interests, coal, lumber, and fisheries. What do you send away half a million of dollars for each year? We want a more industrious population, a productive population. But to return to the Railway: the sooner we get through this Railway the better; it opens so many avenues for discussion. I think it is the most essential part of this document. It is essential to Canada; through it she hopes to make a country of this Colony; and it is essential to us, as bringing us prosperity. I believe the Canadian Government will make the Railway in the interior. We are told that they have four millions lying idle; they cannot have a better investment for it than to build a Railroad from Fraser River to Kamloops.

Hon. MR. DECOSMOS—I remark, Mr. Chairman, that there is a considerable contrast between the views of two Hon. Members of the Executive Council. I mean the Hon. Chief Commissioner (Mr. Trutch) and the Hon. Member for Victoria City (Dr. Helmcken). The former says that it is not proposed to construct a Railway with reference to local interests. He says to advocate our own local interests is simply inapposite. I think differently. I think that we should deal with it locally as well as nationally. I presume it is put in the terms because it is expected that it will benefit the Colony. We don't care so much for its benefiting the people of Montreal as for benefiting ourselves; we look at it from a British Columbian point of view. I say with the Hon. Member for Victoria City (Dr. Helmcken), that we should deal with it with reference to British Columbian interests. After the discussion of yesterday, I confess my surprise. I thought from the tenor of the Resolutions that the Canadian Government would construct the line. Now, we are informed by the Hon. Chief Commissioner that it will be undertaken by a private company. Then, he says if we cannot get a Railway we must have an equivalent. If this clause is not a fixed principle in the terms, then, I ask, what do the Government propose as an equivalent? With regard to Railway communication through British Columbia, we ought, in my opinion, to connect Kamloops and the adjacent country with the seaboard. That is, commencing at navigable water on Fraser River and ending at Savona's Ferry, Kamloops Lake. This line, at the utmost, is only 150 miles long. The expense of its construction, at \$50,000 per mile, would be \$7,500,000. We might safely approach the Canadian Government upon this, irrespective of the terms of Union, under the constitutional provision authorizing the Dominion Government to construct public works of this character.

Hon. CHIEF COMMISSIONER—I say again that the scheme of this Railway, on which this clause is based, hangs on the construction of the line from the seaboard. I never said, and never intended to say, that we had no right to take into consideration whether or not local interests would be benefited. I say that I would not dare to stand up here and advocate a special link of a special line. I should think if I did so that I was doing what the Canadian Government could not listen to. But in a great scheme which contemplates a line of Railway from the seaboard of British Columbia to Canada, I consider that the Dominion Government may take a broad view and strain a point to get it. This clause has been drawn without pretending to define the route. I did not say that it was proposed that the line should be built by a private company. I said that it suggested itself to my mind that the line would be built by a private company, not that it was so proposed. I do not disregard local interests. I look upon this Railway as a necessity of the position—a means to the end. I do not advocate it on its merits as to local interests, but as a grand scheme of Transcontinental Railway. Why, Sir, some say that the terminus should be brought to Esquimalt or Nanaimo. A Railway is wanted in the interests of the Confederacy, but the locality has been generalized as much as possible by the Government. This brings me to another point: though I look upon the Railway as a necessity of the position, in view of the approach of Confederation, I would not pledge myself to bind the Dominion Government to the special terms of this clause. I think it possible that terms may be suggested, instead of this condition, which may be found to be acceptable to the people of this Colony, to whom, as you know, His Excellency says the matter must be referred. I do not look upon the Railway as unessential. I say it is essential; for without unity of interests, Confederation cannot endure. If I did not think that under Confederation we should be governed satisfactorily and to our advantage, I would oppose Confederation, and would advise its abandonment. I do not say, and I am not going to bind myself, that unless that clause is granted by Canada I shall not vote for Confederation, although I think it essential to the position.