

ment of that people date from the inauguration of Responsible Government. The failure of representative institutions, formerly enjoyed upon this Island, is frequently cited as an argument against Responsible Government being introduced here. I admit the partial failure of these institutions. That failure was not, however, on account of the institutions being "representative," but because they were not "responsible." The essential principle was wanting. There was no constitutional connecting link—no bond of sympathy between those who sat by the will of the people and those who sat contrary to, and in defiance of, that will. The system, painted, though it was, in popular dress, was rotten at the core—proved a delusion and a sham. The people, sometimes in indifference and contempt, permitted unsuitable men to be elected, and the whole thing came to rack and ruin. It is to avoid a repetition of that unseemly farce that the people demand that any new constitution which may be conferred upon this Colony shall be based upon the only true principle of responsibility. This question should be finally settled. The Colony desires political rest. To inaugurate a fresh political agitation with Union is most undesirable, and might lead to disastrous results. The possible consequences of a refusal to grant Responsible Government coincident with Confederation, is a part of the subject I almost hesitate to touch. I would neither prophecy, predict, nor threaten; but I would ask the Government to read well and carefully the lessons written in blood in other countries. Human nature is much the same on both sides of this great continent. Has the Anglo-Saxon race become so utterly degenerate here that it is prepared to barter away for mere money subsidies those rights which were purchased with so much blood elsewhere? I utterly refuse to think so meanly of this people. We have seen that even the half-breeds at Red River have too much of the old blood in their veins to permit a fancied political wrong. I am not going to predict a rebellion here. Heaven grant there may be none. But I do feel it my duty to warn the Government against unnecessarily provoking such a possible contingency. Why should there be such an unaccountable antipathy to investing the people of British Columbia with those political powers enjoyed under the British Constitution? Why is the present form of Government so unpopular with the people? I will tell you why. It is just because it is not a people's Government. They had no hand in making it. They had none in working it. They can have none in unmaking it. Only let the people have a hand in forming the Government, in selecting men of their own choice to rule over them, and we would find a popular Government, a strong Government, strong in the heart and confidence of the people. The very same gentlemen who are unpopular now, because ruling without the consent of the people, would be popular then, because ruling by the act and with the consent of the people. The people of British Columbia are naturally a conservative people. Restore to them their political rights, and no Government would need to fear an undue desire for change. The people know best how to manage their own local affairs. Depend upon it, Sir, the people are seldom wrong in their opinions; in their sentiments they are never mistaken. Those now in power have a great responsibility resting upon them. Upon the manner in which they acquit themselves in regard to this very question may hang the most momentous consequences. Will they promote everlasting wellbeing, or precipitate untold evil? Heaven grant that they may do the right! I stand here to-day to advise and warn, not to threaten and predict. The Government has a very grave responsibility in this matter, and may well take a lesson from other countries. The possible consequence of a refusal to grant a reasonable request may be a repetition of the Red River trouble. Let not the Government make a fatal mistake, or they may find themselves in a state of political agitation that may lead to the most serious consequences. I believe that, under circumstances analogous to what occurred in the Red River Territory, the Imperial Government would treat the inhabitants of this Colony with even more consideration. It would not be a question of bayonets and fleets to coerce this Colony, but it would be a question of what concessions ought to be made. I say that the Government have an opportunity now not only of shunning evil, but of doing a great work. Oh! let not the Government make the fatal mistake of saying the people shall not manage their own affairs. Do not let them make the fatal mistake of compelling the people to reject these conditions at the polls. Now I have discharged a duty; I have said all I feel called upon to say at this stage. I have stated my own views and, I venture to think, those of an overwhelming majority of the people of British Columbia, as well as of my own constituents. I trust the Government will take care how they force a vote on this question, which affects this whole community. ["Hear, hear."] This is, in a sense, distinct from the conditions, and it is probable that the Governor must obtain what we are now asking from a different quarter. But, obtain it from where he will, it *must*, I say, be obtained.