

REPLY TO AN ADDRESS

Delivered at Greenwood by Mr. W. J. Bowser,
Conservative Leader, on June 14th, 1920.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Leader of the Conservative Opposition in the Legislative Assembly has made statements in recent speeches and addresses delivered by him throughout the Interior of British Columbia which I hold should not be left unchallenged. Many of these statements were based on unfounded premises, and, taken together, they formulate a tissue of misstatements of fact, suppositions, unwarranted inferences and charges against the Government which are wholly insupportable. I have therefore undertaken in this pamphlet to correct these misstatements and present the facts respecting the matters dealt with by Mr. Bowser in his speeches, having particular reference to his address at Greenwood on June 11th last.

The first observation to which I shall address myself is Mr. Bowser's reflection that I, as your representative in Parliament, had not visited the district I represent with sufficient frequency. In other words, the insinuation was that, having become a member of the Government, I had become detached from your interests and indifferent to your welfare.

You are aware that, being a member of the Government, it is imperative that I reside in Victoria, where the business of Government is carried on. As a Minister of the Crown I am responsible for the administration of two departments, the combined expenditure of which reaches the sum of \$5,000,000 per annum. I am paid a salary for the proper and capable administration of these departments, and I think the first claim upon my time and energies demands that I should give the most capable service possible for the salary I receive. It is only during the summer season that a Minister can leave his office conveniently, and then only temporarily and for short periods. I admit that my choice and inclination would have led me to spend much more time in Greenwood Riding than I have been able to do. But, for the reasons I have stated, and for the additional reason that there was sickness in my family during 1918 and again in 1920, my choice in this matter has been limited and governed by circumstances.

It was the habit of the Ministers in the old McBride-Bowser regime—especially during the last six or seven years of that regime—to run about the country, cross the Atlantic frequently, keep the machine well oiled by personal contact, leaving the responsible business of the Government to be carried on by departmental heads. The result was that in the last seven years they were in office the debt of the Province had increased