

"A week having elapsed since my last interview with you, in which I requested that a session of the Legislative Assembly be called for not later than the 20th October next, and not having received a reply as to the decision of yourself and colleagues on the subject, I desire to commend it once more to your early consideration. I do not think that I should any longer ignore the existing political conditions in the province, and the unrest and uncertainty resulting from recent political changes--changes which it will not be necessary to specify. It is sufficient, I think, that grave doubt now exists as to whether your administration retains the confidence of the Legislative Assembly. And for this reason I believe it to be my duty to insist that you either meet the Legislative Assembly on or before the 20th day of October next, as at first suggested, or that the Legislative Assembly be dissolved, and a general election be held on or before the said date."

I yielded, however, to the representations of yourself and colleagues as to the inexpediency of calling a session earlier than January, and the alternative offer of a dissolution was not accepted. But your letter to me of the 2nd September last stated:

"I hasten to assure Your Honor that the Council has the utmost confidence that it will be able to satisfy you that there is no cause for apprehension respecting the general political conditions now existing in the province. As regards the relations of the government to the Legislative Assembly, I have no reason to believe that the government will not command a majority of the House."

Subsequent events have demonstrated that your assurances were not well founded.

3. On the 18th October last I was asked to sign three special warrants, as follows:

1. The improvement of the trail from Hope to Summit City, \$1,000. 2. The improvement of the South Vancouver trunk road \$10,000. 3. The erection of a court house at Rossland, \$45,000.

The latter amount being three times larger than that authorised by the legislature.

The appropriations made by the legislature for the above-named public works had been allowed to lapse, owing, as Mr. Cotton reported, to the fact that it was found in the first case "impossible" to

expend the amount before the end of the fiscal year, ending June 30th, 1899; in the second case "impossible" to expend the amount voted before the said period, owing to the "dilatatoriness" of the Municipal Council of South Vancouver; and in the third case "impracticable" to expend the amount voted. I thought then, and still think, that the said appropriations had been allowed to lapse because Mr. Cotton was unable to properly superintend and administer the business of the two departments of which he had been in charge for four months before the fiscal year expired. And it is also to be noted that it was not until the middle of October that Mr. Cotton was ready to undertake any expenditure in connection with the said public works. Thus the intentions of the legislature were not carried out, and there was direct loss, particularly in the districts concerned. I did not sign the said warrants, as it appeared perfectly clear to me, for reasons set forth in my letter to you of the 18th of October last, that such warrants were not authorised by the Revenue Act. On observing, however, that the Attorney-General had not been present at the meeting of the council at which the issue of said warrants was advised, I wrote to you as follows:

"Now, if you do not feel satisfied, on consideration, that the objections here urged against signing the said warrants are valid, let me suggest that you refer the question to the Attorney-General for a legal opinion as to whether the said warrants can, constitutionally, be issued. Should he report to me that they may be I shall be very pleased to have them again referred to me for reconsideration."

(Letter to you, 19th October last, page 4.)

To this letter and suggestion I have never received any reply. So that I was left to infer that the Attorney-General agreed that the issue of such warrants would be unconstitutional, and that had I followed the advice tendered me by the Executive Council I would have signed special warrants without any lawful authority for so doing.

In this same letter of the 19th October last, I also said:

"I regret to say, therefore, that I find myself unable to approve of them (the special warrants) or of any others of a like nature. And in this connection I may say that yesterday afternoon I