

Armstrong, Hon. William James, Sheriff of the county of Westminster, is a native Canadian, having been born in the county of Durham, Ontario, on the 31st of October, 1826. He is a son of Captain William Armstrong who emigrated from county Caven, Ireland, towards the close of the last century and settled on a farm near Millbrook in Ontario. During Mr. Armstrong's youth the school system of Upper Canada was not on the excellent footing it now is and in the rural districts the children of the settlers had very few advantages in the way of education. The consequence was Mr. Armstrong had in a very large measure to educate himself. He attended the school in his native township till he had fully mastered the elementary branches of learning which only were taught and he then assisted his father in the management of the farm till 1852 when the family left Ontario and went to California where they settled in Grass Valley. Here Mr. Armstrong was engaged with his father and brother in mining till 1858 when the family came to British Columbia and took up their residence at Langley. In March of 1859 Mr. Armstrong built a house at New Westminster, then known as Queensborough, which had been selected by Col. Moody as the capital of the colony. This was the first house erected in the new town and Mr. Armstrong was the first citizen. He opened a general store and continued in business uninterruptedly till 1873. When the first municipal council was elected in 1860 he was chosen as one of that body and remained in the council continuously till 1873. In 1869 he was selected by the council as its president and also in 1870. Mr. Armstrong took an active part in bringing about confederation and after the consummation of the union he was elected to represent the District of Westminster in the provincial legislature. In 1873 when the McCreight Government was defeated and the De Cosmos Government came into power Mr. Armstrong joined the Cabinet as Minister of Finance and Agriculture and retained this office till 1876 when his party was defeated. He continued an active worker on the opposition benches till 1879. During the session of this year a deadlock occurred and the government was about to appeal to the country without having passed the estimates. Mr. Armstrong seeing the effect which this action would have on the provincial credit arranged a meeting between three representatives from each party and brought about an understanding whereby supplies were voted for the conduct of public business. In the