

Author
Title
Election BC-1898

which has been so generously extended to us in the past. If we have not wholly come up to your expectations, we ask you to carefully consider whether those who seek to take our places would have done better or as well. Examine proceedings of the Legislature for the past four years, and ask yourselves what policy they have expounded, that if carried into effect would have bettered your present conditions or advanced the interests of the province in a degree comparable with the progress that has already been made. It is a matter of comparison, a question of policy against policy, of men against men. These considerations I ask you to take home to yourselves seriously and by your decision we are willing to abide.

Introduction of Federal Issues.

There have been strong and persistent efforts made to divert the attention of the electors from the issues which have arisen in provincial affairs to those which are of a federal nature, and I know of no stronger evidence of the weakness of the cause of many who are in provincial matters opposed to the present administration than that they wished to introduce issues which are foreign to our home affairs, and to conduct the campaign on lines which would confuse the electorate and make this government a stalking horse for politicians at Ottawa. It was an evidence that they were not strong in legitimate opposition in provincial policy. Many of my supporters who were Conservatives, seeing the tendency towards the introduction of Dominion politics, were anxious to divide the lines accordingly, and urged such a course on the government. I took a decided stand in that I refused to sanction what I could not endorse. Others again on both sides suggested a coalition. The government said NO. That in perhaps a less objectionable form was a recognition of the same principle. I don't believe in mixing up Provincial and Dominion politics. We stand or fall within our own fortress.

Personal Position in Politics.

Personally, I need not tell you that I

am Conservative and was in my private capacity a supporter of the late administration at Ottawa. My political sentiments on that score were formed years ago, when owing to events familiar to most of us sentiment in this Province was consolidated on that side. If another course had been pursued at that time in regard to the policy affecting British Columbia, it might have been different with me and many others. Originally a free trader, I nevertheless endorsed the principle of protection in the National Policy and I believed from a practical standpoint, all things considered, and particularly in view of the attitude of the United States towards this country, it was in the interests of Canada. I think so still. But whether the Conservatives or Liberals were right, it was my right and privilege to vote on Dominion political issues as I pleased; but as a government, this government has been absolutely without prejudice or without party color. Since the present party at Ottawa has come into power, we have endeavored to act in the same friendly way and without a particle of prejudice, towards them, as we did towards their predecessors, and have tried in every way and on all occasions to cooperate as far as co-operation was possible in any and all matters affecting the mutual interests of the Province and the Dominion. I defy any person to lay finger on any action of ours in relation to the Dominion, which has not breathed of friendship and earnest desire on our part to meet the government at Ottawa half way. We have acted on the principle that there should be no distinction of politics in interests that are mutual, and party lines should never enter to interfere.

Strict Neutrality.

Therefore, I say, we are before you as British Columbians on a British Columbian policy. I might point to the disadvantages and the evils arising out of coalescing in politics with the Dominion; but I am not now dealing with that subject, except in so far as it is necessary to explain our position, which is and has been one of strictest neutrality.