The Colonist.

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THE CAUSE OF THE DISMISSAL.

The public demand for a full and complete statement of the causes which led up to the dismissal of the Turner ministry is a reasonable one, and no fine-spun theories as to the obligation imposed by a minister's oath to keep secret what has passed between himself and the Lieutenant-Governor will satisfy the people. We question whether the oath of office applies to the correspondence between the Lieutenant-Governor and his ministers leading up to their resignation or dismissal. In Cole' Institutes the obligation to secrecy is said to be limited to "the king's counsel and all transactions of the council itself," and in the reports of the British Oaths Commission in 1887, it is stated that the oath of office is: "You shall keep secret all matters committed and revealed unto you, or that shall be secretly treated of in council." Todd, on page 195, Vol. II., of his "Parliamentary Government in England," speaks as follows regarding the obligation of ministers to secrecy: "Hence they are not at liberty to divulge proceedings in council, or to reveal to others any confidential communications they may have had with the sovereign, or with a colleague in office—without express permission from the crown." The test seems to be whether the communications between the Lieutenant-Governor and his ministers were confidential in their nature. All communications between these persons are not necessarily confidential. It would be a monstrous thing if they were, for under such circumstances all manner of wrongs might be perpetrated, and the public might never be advised of the facts regarding them. We take the position that communications between a lieutenant-governor and his ministers, other than those relating to matters to be dealt with by the lieutenant-governor-in-council, are not confidential within the meaning of the oath. Lieutenant-Governor McInnes seems himself to have taken this view. On August 8 he granted an interview to a Colonist reporter, which was duly published in this paper. That interview was as follows:

When called upon by a member of the Colonist staff last evening, Lieutenant-Governor McInnes declared the letter referred to by Hon. Mr. Turner as written and delivered to him during the morning, to be plainly and unmistakably a notification of dismissal, couched in phraseology as courteous as possible, but terminating all official relations. No hint of the contents of this letter, or of any previous communication leading up to it, had reached the public through the medium of Government House, while the news of the summons to Hon. Mr. Beaven could only have become public property through the gentleman commissioned with the formation of the new government. The letter of the morning to Hon. Mr. Turner was not of a nature to require any reply; it was delivered to the deputy finance minister, Mr. Flett, at 10:30 or thereabouts, to be placed in Hon. Mr. Turner's hands immediately. Hon. Mr. Beaven had been sent for at noon.

The Lieutenant-Governor declared that he could not comprehend Mr. Turner's surprise, for a letter of dismissal—such it was in effect—was the natural and necessary sequence of two letters addressed to the government as long ago as the 14th of July, and the numerous interviews had with Hon. Mr. Turner since that date. As soon as the returns of the voting on the 9th ultimo, with the final results in Cariboo, came to hand, he had informed Hon. Mr. Turner that in his opinion the country had not signified a continuance of confidence in the government, and he could not therefore authorize any new appointments nor any expenditures of money, except in the course of official routine or matters of evident emergency.

The position thus indicated had not been accepted by Hon. Mr. Turner, and much as he had respected that gentleman—and still respected him—he felt that his duty to the country left him no other course than that outlined in the letter precedent to the call to Hon. Mr. Beaven. As to the reasons prompting him to select this honorable gentleman to assume the responsibilities of the premiership, the Lieutenant-Governor would of course say nothing.

On August 15 Mr. Beaven, who had been entrusted by the Lieutenant-Governor with the task of forming an administration, made a public statement, when he gave the press a letter from the Lieutenant-Governor as follows:

The Government of the Province of British Columbia.
The 8th of August, 1898.

At Government House, Victoria, B. C.
To the Hon. Robert Beaven, Victoria, B. C.:

Sir:—I have the honor to inform you that by letter of even date herewith I have relieved the Hon. J. H. Turner and his colleagues from their functions as my advisers and members of my executive council. This action I have taken in view of the result of the general elections held on the 9th of last month. This is probably the most important period yet known in the development of the resources of the province, and during the month that has elapsed since the said general elections, I have deeply felt the need of advisers in whom I could place full confidence, and whose recommendations I could unhesitatingly approve. And knowing your thorough knowledge of the special needs and requirements of the province, and having in view your long and honorable experience throughout a quarter of a century in the administration of its affairs, and regarding you, moreover, as peculiarly fit to reconcile its contending political factions, I hereby call upon you to assume the task of forming a ministry, and to once more act as chief adviser to the representative of the Crown.

(Signed) THOS. R. McINNES,
Lieutenant-Governor.

"I at once made an appointment to meet His Honor, and did so," says Hon. Mr. Beaven in tracing the course of action based upon this remarkable letter. "You will observe that His Honor states that he had relieved Hon. Mr. Turner from his functions. This was the absolute condition of affairs then. At first I took the view that while it appeared as a result of the general election that Hon. Mr. Turner could only hope for the support of a minority in the assembly and that Mr. Semlin and Hon. Mr. Martin were practically in the same position, I was without a constituency or following in the assembly, I considered the best way to have determined the point beyond dispute as to who possessed the confidence of the country was to convene the legislature as soon as the writ from Cassiar was returnable.

"It transpired that the action which resulted in the dismissal of the Turner government was of a cumulative character and that other circumstances than those referred to in His Honor's letter, more immediately connected with ministerial advice and conduct brought about a different condition of affairs, and that the delay which must have occurred from calling a session might result in great injury. This feature of the case is one upon which the press and general public are entirely in the dark.

"I understand it is considered contrary to official etiquette to make known the full details at the present time. I can say this much that in one instance alone, had the Lieutenant-Governor accepted Mr. Attorney-General Eberts' advice, and his construction of the Revenue act, as explained to me by His Honor, an important check which the Constitution act places on the payment of money out of the treasury would be a dead letter, and the power of the members of the government of the day over the money in the treasury would be practically unlimited. This is a power which the best of governments, to my mind, should not possess, and which the Constitution act expressly prohibits.

"It was very evident that the relations between the Lieutenant-Governor and the Turner administration were of a character that could not have continued. The circumstances connected with the ministerial action and advice as disclosed by the correspondence, and as related by His Honor to me, brought me to consider that it became a duty to endeavor if possible to assist in averting a crisis in provincial affairs. You know the result."

It would be absurd for any one to pretend that the Lieutenant-Governor can have regarded the communications between himself and Mr. Turner as confidential or as covered by the oath of office, for if he did he would not have taken the very first opportunity which offered to give the public his version of the matter nor have authorized Mr. Beaven to make the above statement. It is not necessary to point out that the obligation to secrecy is mutual, that the Lieutenant-Governor may not hold his advisers to an obligation of secrecy and yet give to the public such version of matters as suits his convenience. Indeed so far as anything he has done casts any light upon his views in this regard, the Lieutenant-Governor must be taken to have no desire to cloak his acts with official secrecy. If there shall prove to be any difficulty in the way of making the whole correspondence public, the only inference from the facts above cited will be that His Honor's present advisers feel well assured that his course will not stand public investigation, and hence are desirous of keeping it from the people until after they have been returned at the by-elections. The injustice of such a course will be a subject for comment hereafter.

Mr. Turner feels somewhat embarrassed in regard to making public the correspondence at this stage, not only because he wishes further to inform himself as to his obligation to secrecy, but because his reply to the Lieutenant-Governor's last letter has not yet been sent to His Honor. In the meantime he authorizes the following statement:

"It is quite correct, as was stated by the Lieutenant-Governor to a Colonist reporter, that in a letter written to me on July 14, he informed me that in his opinion the government had not secured a verdict of confidence from the people, and that he could not therefore approve any new appointments nor any expenditures of money except in the case of official routine or matters of evident emergency. As to what took place between us subsequently, I would feel obliged to keep it secret if His Honor had not authorized Mr. Beaven's statement of the 15th inst. In that statement Mr. Beaven alleges that the action which resulted in the dismissal of my government 'was of a cumulative nature and that other circumstances than those referred to in His Honor's letter, (that is the result of the elections) more immediately connected with ministerial advice and conduct brought about a different condition of affairs.' Further Mr. Beaven states that the Lieutenant-Governor informed him that the advice of Attorney-General Eberts if followed would have made an important check upon the payment of money out of the treasury a dead letter. This statement makes it incumbent upon me to reply to the extent, at least, of the Lieutenant-Governor's remark.

"If the Lieutenant-Governor had other reasons than those stated in his letter of August 8 for asking me to resign, it was his duty to have informed me of them. Constitutional government requires that the governor shall advise his ministers as well as that the ministers shall advise the governor. There should be perfect good faith between them, and it is certainly an anomalous position in which the Lieutenant-Governor found himself, when he intimated to Mr. Beaven on August 9 that he had other reasons than he had given me for the dismissal. The only reason which he had given me was that in his opinion I had lost the confidence of the house. If there were other reasons it was clearly his duty to have informed me of them, but in none of the many interviews I had with him nor in any of his letters to me up to the time of calling in Mr. Beaven did he so much as hint that he had any other cause for his action than that already mentioned. Thus I was dismissed from office for reasons, the nature of which I was not told and for which I was never given the slightest opportunity of explaining. Only one of those alleged "cumulative' reasons is made public by Mr. Beaven, and it is to this one only that I shall speak, pending the publication of the correspondence, which is not yet completed.

"The Lieutenant-Governor says through Mr. Beaven that if Attorney-General Eberts' advice had been followed, an important check upon the payment of public moneys would be a dead letter, and that the government's power over money in the treasury would be practically unlimited. Either Mr. Beaven has incorrectly reported what the Lieutenant-Governor said, or the latter has entirely misconceived what did occur. I give the facts, which are not matters occurring in council, but simply a part of the routine business of the treasury.

"Certain warrants for ordinary expenditure on public works and other services, voted by the legislature and assented to by the Lieutenant-Governor, were sent to him for his signature in the ordinary course of business. As some of these were for wages on work that had been finished and others for wages on work then in progress, and the Lieutenant-Governor had not sent them back with his signature, I informed him that it was important that they should be signed. He then asked for more details, and I sent the Auditor-General to him to answer any questions that might be asked. To this official the Lieutenant-Governor said that he did not think that such expenditures as had been voted by the House and assented to by him, and had been examined by the auditor and passed by the executive council, required his signature at all, and he further stated that the government of the Dominion and those of the other provinces paid out money in such cases without the governor's signature. Subsequently I was present at an interview between the Lieutenant-Governor and the Attorney-General when this matter was discussed, and the last named official then expressed the opinion that the law appeared to contemplate that the former should sign such warrants. He pointed out a section which seemed to bear out the Lieutenant-Governor's suggestion, but expressed the view that it would be in accordance with the spirit of the act for the Lieutenant-Governor in all cases to sign warrants. At the same interview he directed His Honor's attention to a section requiring the lieutenant-governor's signature absolutely in all cases where special warrants were asked. It seems to me that this, which is an accurate statement of what did occur, completely disposes of what Mr. Beaven represents was one of the 'cumulative reasons' which the Lieutenant-Governor had for his action, and shows, as I have said, either that Mr. Beaven misunderstood the Lieutenant-Governor or the latter was far astray in his recollection of what occurred.

"I submit that His Honor's course was extraordinary throughout. On August 8, he sent me a letter asking for my resignation on no other ground than that he did not think I possessed the confidence of the House. At the time that letter was written I was certainly his adviser, and yet at that time he had sent for Mr. Beaven and advised with him, telling him that he had other reasons for dismissing me and authorizing Mr. Beaven to publish an outline of one of the alleged reasons. I received His Honor's letter at 12 noon. I did not consider it as a dismissal, although the Governor told your reporter that he intended it as one. I thought it required a reply, and I was preparing this, in which, by the way, I was not going to resign, when I was informed by a gentleman, in no way connected with the government, that Mr. Beaven had been called in. This I thought at the time was a joke, but on going into town, I found it was known generally, that it had been talked of at a public gathering at Esquimalt and further that the Lieutenant-Governor's letter to me of that date was also discussed on the streets, having been made public by some one. This letter and several others of importance ought to be made public, and I am considering how far I am at liberty to give them to the press.

"The position of affairs as far as the house was concerned was this: I had a support of at least eighteen members, and almost certainly of nineteen, as was shown by Mr. Beaven in his published statement, when he said that one member of the then opposition was ineligible as a candidate. That is to say, including my own vote the then government party numbered nineteen certainly, and almost certainly twenty, out of a house of thirty-eight members. Yet the Lieutenant-Governor chose to decide for himself what the house would do when it met, and dismissed me from power, to replace me, first by a gentleman not in the house at all, and afterwards by a party, which, according to his own adviser, Mr. Beaven, was in a minority."

The aforegoing is as far as Mr. Turner feels warranted in going at the present time, but other matters are in possession of the public, and may properly be spoken of. We do not now refer to any reports which seem to cast light upon what the Lieutenant-Governor's personal motive may have been. We are discussing a constitutional, not a personal question. The latter can hardly be kept out of the case, but we prefer to keep it apart from the constitutional points at issue, which are those by which His Honor's present advisers must stand or fall.

The matters just spoken of are these: His Honor brought things to a crisis with his late advisers by declining to sign certain warrants, which they had advised him ought to be signed if the business of the country was not to be interrupted. It is alleged that in asking his advisers for their resignations, His Honor advanced, as a reason for so doing, that he agreed with them in their advice as to the necessity of the expenditures, and because he agreed with them, he desired them to resign. That is to say, he dismissed his advisers for recommending what he admitted ought to be done, although they had at least one half the house elected to support them, and called upon a man who had been defeated by the people, to carry out the recommendations which his responsible advisers had made.

It is also alleged that one of the reasons which His Honor gives for dismissing his ministers is that they inserted in the original redistribution bill a clause extending the time within which voters resident in Cassiar might register, and that they kept the House in session all night discussing that section. As a matter of fact, the House did not discuss that section, which was struck out of the bill before it was taken up. In the next place, the action of the government in conducting the business of the House is something for which they are responsible to the House only, and their action in keeping the House in session all night met with the hearty approval of a majority of the members.

We allege that the grounds upon which the Lieutenant-Governor acted—we mean now the public grounds, and not the motives which actuated him—are correctly given above, and may be thus summarized:

That he determined, before the elections were over, that the government had been defeated; and acted upon that determination, notwithstanding the result of the elections showed the contrary, and, for all he or any other man could tell, his advisers were in a position to meet the House and carry on business;

That he wholly misconceived the advice given by the Attorney-General and acted upon such misconception without asking his ministers to explain;

That he took exception to the government's having proposed certain legislation, which was withdrawn, and that he found fault with them for keeping the House in session all night.

We allege that these are the reasons, and all the reasons of a public character, which actuated the Lieutenant-Governor in what he has done, and we assert that if the whole correspondence were published, it would disclose no other reason. We challenge the present ministry to give the correspondence to the public, so that the voters may be able to judge if what we have just said is not the truth, and the whole truth. We claim that the first reason is not an adequate one under constitutional usage, and that the others are trivial.

In view of the foregoing facts, it becomes necessary to seek for an explanation of the Lieutenant-Governor's action. Every man is supposed to act with an object of some kind, and as it is impossible to get into the mind of a man and ascertain exactly what moved him to take any course, we must form our opinions from his acts themselves, explaining them according to the rules which ordinarily govern human conduct. We find the Lieutenant-Governor dismissing his ministers upon utterly untenable grounds, and calling in a gentleman who was not a member of the legislature to form a government. The only possible explanation of this is that the Lieutenant-Governor thought the time had come for him to take the control of the politics of the country out of the hands of the people, and regulate for them what he chose to think they were unable to regulate for themselves. He seems to have been impressed with the idea that an opportunity had come for him to make himself felt in the politics of the province. His regularly constituted advisers were denied his confidence. The thirty-eight members-elect were wholly disregarded. The opposition leaders were passed by. He went outside of both political parties, selected a gentleman who had, in his election card, declared that he supported neither party, one without a seat in the House or a single follower, and asked him to assume the duty of carrying out acts, recommended by his regularly constituted advisers. He fancied that a Gordian knot existed, and he proceeded to cut it. He declared that he had confidence neither in the then government nor the then opposition. The only possible explanation is that he wished to set his own wishes above those of the people, that he wanted new men at the head of affairs, and was prepared to give effect to his own personal and individual preferences in securing them. We say that his conduct is wholly unprecedented and unjustifiable, and that his present advisers must be held to account for it.

CONSERVATIVE CONVENTION.

On September 1 and 2 there will be held in Vancouver a convention of the Conservatives of British Columbia, as will be seen by reference to an advertisement printed in another column of to-day's paper. This convention will be of great importance and unusual interest. Its importance is due to the necessity for fully organizing the party in view of the probability of elections being brought on for the House of Commons at an early day. The interest attaching to the meeting will be enhanced by the presence of Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper and the Hon. Geo. E. Foster, two distinguished members of the late federal cabinet.

It is impossible to overestimate the need for organization. British Columbia must be redeemed at the next election and it can be if the party is got into good fighting trim. The administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been a conspicuous failure, and in no particulars more so than those which come most closely home to the people of this province. The Liberal party is badly discredited here. It has only a record of broken promises. The people only ask an opportunity to record their condemnation. But while this is so, organization is necessary, and therefore it is to be hoped that every effort will be made to render the convention a great success. Assurances have already been received that the Interior constituencies will be well represented and the Island will surely be strongly in evidence.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION.

An impression seems to be abroad that there is some law governing the matters involved in the recent coup d'etat of the Lieutenant-Governor, and that by reference to this law it will be possible to say whether or not his conduct is justifiable, and also whether or not his late ministers are bound to secrecy as to what transpired between His Honor and themselves regarding their dismissal. This is not the case. The law of the subject is found in precedent, and in precedent only; except so far as statutes have applied British precedents to Canadian affairs. These precedents are scattered over the history of the last two centuries, although most of them have been settled during the present one. We have several times quoted those lines of Tennyson, wherein he speaks of freedom broadening slowly down from precedent to precedent, and every person, who is interested in the working of our constitution ought to keep them in mind. From the absolutism of the Stuarts to the "crowned republic" of the Victorian era there has been a broadening out in the direction of an increase of popular rights and an abridgement of the powers of the Sovereign: The latest, and to use a phrase familiar to lawers, the leading case in the dismissal of the Melbourne administration by William VI. in 1834.

Sir Erskine May, on page 146 et seq., of his "Constitutional History of England," relates the circumstances of the dismissal in the following language:

In October the death of Earl Spencer having removed his son, Lord Althorp, from the leadership of the House of Commons and from his office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, the king seized this opportunity for suddenly dismissing his ministers, and proceeded to consult the Duke of Wellington upon the formation of a government from the opposite party. * * * All the accustomed grounds for dismissing a ministry were wanting. There was no immediate difference of opinion between them and the King upon any measure or question of public policy; there was no disunion among themselves; nor even was there any indication that they had lost the confidence of parliament. But the accidental removal of a single minister—not necessarily from the government, but only from one house of parliament to the other, was made the occasion for dismissing the entire administration. It is true that the king viewed with apprehension the policy of his ministers in regard to the Irish church; but his assent was not then required to any specific measure of which he disapproved, nor was this the ground assigned for their dismissal. The right of the King to dismiss his ministers was unquestionable; but constitutional usage has prescribed certain conditions under which this right should be exercised. It should be exercised solely in the interests of the state and on grounds that could be justified to parliament—to whom, as well as to the King, the ministers are responsible. Even in 1784, when George III. had determined to crush the coalition ministry, he did not venture to dismiss them, until they had been defeated in the House of Lords upon Mr. Fox's India bill. And again in 1807, the ministers were at issue with the King upon a constitutional question before he proceeded to form another ministry. But here it was not directly alleged that the ministers had lost the confidence of the King, and so little could it be affirmed that they had lost the confidence of parliament that an immediate dissolution was counseled by the new administration. The act of the King bore too much the impress of his personal will and too little of those reasons of state policy by which it should have been prompted; but its impolicy was so signal as to throw into the shade its unconstitutional character.

This incident is almost identical in its principal features with the act of the Lieutenant-Governor in regard to the Turner ministry. There was no difference of opinion on any question of public policy, no disunion in the ministry, no evidence that they had lost the confidence of the legislature. On the contrary, in his letter of dismissal, the Lieutenant-Governor says that he had decided to accept the advice of his ministers upon a point which he had taken time to consider, and Mr. Beaven, whom he called in, expressly admitted that Mr. Turner was likely to have a majority in the new house. We may therefore apply to the Lieutenant-Governor's acts the language of Sir Erskine May and say: "That all the accustomed grounds for dismissing a ministry were wanting; that it bore too much impress of his personal will."

The King in the case now under consideration called upon the Duke of Wellington to form a ministry, but the Duke declined to accept the responsibility and advised His Majesty to entrust the task to Sir Robert Peel. Here again we find a parallel to the recent British Columbia incident. Mr. Beaven was sent for, but finding himself unable to form a ministry, handed back the trust and Mr. Semlin was sent for.

When parliament met after the Peel ministry had been formed the responsibility for the King's acts naturally formed a subject of discussion. The Duke of Wellinton declared that "there is not a moment in the King's life, from his accession to his demise, during which there is not some one responsible to parliament for his public conduct," and further that "there can be no exercise of the Crown's authority for which it must not find some minister to make himself responsible." Sir Robert Peel took precisely the same position, declaring in his place in parliament that he accepted the responsibility of everything that had been done, because not even in an extreme case "could the Crown commit an act which could be the subject of censure or blame."

We quote from a summary of his speech in the House of Commons as reported in Hansard: "So completely had the theory of ministerial responsibility been now established, that, though Sir Robert Peel was out of the realm when the late ministers were dismissed, though he could have had no cognizance of the causes which induced the King to dismiss them—though the Duke of Wellington had been invested with the sole government of the country without his knowledge, he yet boldly avowed that, by accepting office after these events, he became constitutionally responsible for them all, as if he himself had advised them." As Todd, on page 17 of his "Parliamentary Government of the Colonies" says, "in all acts of government, the ministers of the Crown are required to assume, on behalf of and with the consent of the Sogereign, the burden of personal power and thereby relieve the Crown of all personal responsibility," and again on page 18, "the personal irresponsibility of the Sovereign and his absolute immunity from the consequences of misgovernment, is a fixed principle in the English constitutional system." Again it is said on page 19 that "the action of the monarch must be conditional upon the concurrence of confidential advisers." The quotations just made are cited by Todd from Gladstone. Sir Robert Peel may further be quoted in this connection, for we declared that an incoming minister in order to justify his acceptance of office, must acquaint himself with the circumstances in which the offer is made."

In view of the aforegoing authoritative declarations as to constitutional practice in the British Empire, it is idle for the News-Advertiser or any other apologist for the government to declare that Hon. Mr. Semlin has not accepted the responsibility of the late dismissal, but that Mr. Beaven, who is not in the legislature, is to be held to account for it. To such a contention we can only apply the News-Advertiser's favorite adjectives, stupid and ignorant.

On the question of secrecy some precedents may be cited. The reasons for which the King acted in dismissing his ministry in 1834 were made public by the Duke of Wellington in a letter to the Duke of Rockingham written on November 31, 1834, nearly a month before the general election was held and nearly three months before parliament met. But we need not go outside of Canada for illustrations. In 1855 the correspondence between Governor Manners-Sutton, of New Brunswick, and his advisers on the prohibition law, which was followed by a dissolution, was all freely made public and formed one of the issues in the elections. The same was the case in 1866 when Governor Gordon precipitated a crisis over confederation. Every one who remembers that incident will recall that everything was at once made public. But perhaps the most conspicuous case is that in the old province of Canada in 1858, when George Brown attempted to form a ministry after the defeat of the Macdonald cabinet, when all the correspondence between Governor Head and Mr. Brown and all the proceedings relating to the change of ministry were printed in the newspapers from day to day. We find in New Zealand in 1879 the government laying before the house the grounds upon which they asked for a dissolution and the Governor's reply. In fact, the books are full of cases where communications between the Crown or its representative and its advisers, not being proceedings-in-council, have been made public freely.

But precedents are not needed. There is no law requiring any one to keep secret what transpires outside of the meetings of the cabinet and confidential communications. Todd on page 195 of his "Parliamentary Government in England" thus states the practice:

The deliberations of the cabinet upon all matters which engage their attention are strictly private and confidential; being kept secret even from other members of the administration, who have no seat in the cabinet, and who are not directly responsible for the conduct of the government. Upon their first introduction into the Privy Council ministers are invariably sworn to secrecy. Hence they are not at liberty, thenceforth, to divulge proceedings in council—or to reveal to others any confidential communications they may have had, whether with their Sovereign or with a colleague in office, without the express permission of the Crown. This applies to those who have ceased to form part of an administration, as to members of an existing government.

It cannot be contended that the acts of the Lieutenant-Governor which led up to the dismissal of his late advisers were proceedings in council; hence they do not come in the first class of secret matters. If the reasons for the dismissal of the Melbourne ministry, or of the prohibition ministry in New Brunswick, or the anti-confederation ministry in the same province, if the correspondence between George Brown and Governor Head, or the New Zealand correspondence of 1897 were not confidential, surely what transpired between Lieutenant-Governor McInnes and his late advisers on this subject cannot be held to be confidential. Moreover, as we have already shown, the Lieutenant-Governor himself has followed precedent in not regarding it as confidential.

The unexpected length to which this article has grown prevents an argument to show why such communications ought not to be regarded as confidential and why it is not only the right, but the duty of the late ministry to make them public.

Speaking of the interview of a Colonist reporter with the Lieutenant-Governor, published on August 9th, the News-Advertiser says that "His Honor emphatically denied it as soon as it was published." This statement of the News-Advertiser is wholly false. So far from the Lieutenant-Governor having denied the interview, two days later, when another member of the Colonist staff was in conversation with him, he referred to the interview, saying that one part of it was put a little too strong, but he would say nothing. The Lieutenant-Governor has not denied the interview, and will not deny it. Moreover, there is not the slightest reason why he should do so. The absurdity of pretending that so public an act as a letter dismissing a ministry could be regarded as a confidential communication must be manifest at once. His Honor did perfectly right in granting an interview to a reporter, although he might have contented himself with referring the reporter to Mr. Beaven. The day of Star Chamber proceedings has gone by.