# Defeat Is Emphasized

## Supply Again Refused In Legislature By Nineteen To Sixteen.

## Chimney Creek Bridge Cable Purchase Investigation Completed.

## Report of Findings to be Laid Before the Crown for Action.

(From Friday's Daily.)

Although dissolution of the legislature did not occur yesterday, events so shaped themselves that this ceremony is now inevitable in the very near future—most probably tomorrow. And the House will be dispersed without passage of even the most indisputably necessary votes of supply, although the Premier made a second and commendable effort to secure the support of the opposition for this particular purpose at yesterday afternoon's sitting. Instead the members, taking the ground that passage of supply would perhaps improve the Premier's position in seeking the favor of a dissolution, negatived the preliminary motion in this regard by 19 to 16, reiterating and confirming want of confidence and leaving the First Minister no alternative course than to request His Honor to come down and end the career of the present legislature. This only is withheld in consequence of a select committee having been appointed at the request of Mr. Curtis to investigate the Premier's position with respect to a certain contract for wire cable secured by E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., in connection with the Chimney Creek bridge. It is expected that this committee( which entered upon its investigation last evening, will be ready to report today, and nothing further remains but to bring the ill-starred session to a close. In addition to making certain the termination of the Prior administration, yesterday's proceedings were marked by the passage to finality of the bill to enable Victoria to submit her hotel proposition to the people, and the bill amending the Vancouver General hospital's Act in certain minor details. When the House rose for the day, discussion was being had on a resolution by the member for Rossland, affirming that under no moral or legal right is the Columbia & Western Railway entitled to subsidy for its fourth section, extending from Christina lake to Midway. On this familiar text some spirited addresses were yesterday delivered by Mr. Curtis, Mr. Martin, Mr. Eberts and Mr. Oliver, the member for Dewdney having the floor at the resumption of the debate today.

When the House resumed yesterday afternoon, the Premier moved that under the special circumstances that had arisen the House proceed forthwith to committee of supply.

Mr. McBride at once took exception, urging the necessity of an explanation in detail of the "special circumstances" referred to which would justify this exceptional course. In view of the adverse vote in the House yesterday he did not think the government should make this unusual motion.

Mr. Curtis did not object to a reasonable amount of supply—say for two or three months, but did not see wherein Premier Prior was justified in receiving a dissolution.

Premier Prior in response to the opposition leader explained in detail the well understood circumstances prompting his motion. In view of the fact that two or three months must elapse before a general election could be held, he asked for three months' supply, which being passed, the government would ask for a dissolution and arrange for an immediate election.

Mr. McBride next wanted to know if the Premier still adhered to his statement that whether supply be passed or not, His Honor had definitely promised a dissolution.

The Premier replied that he had nothing to add to what had been said on this text yesterday. If the House refused to pass reasonable supply as asked for, he would have no other course than to ask the governor for a dissolution.

"But will you get it?" asked Mr. McPhillips.

Again Hon. Col. Prior held that he had fully answered this yesterday.

Mr. Houston held that as business men, the members of the House should attack the estimates as presented, eliminate such items as they not absolutely needed, and pass the others.

Mr. Oliver wanted to know how the Premier, with but one minister was going to administer affairs until a general election could be held. He favored a reasonable supply but doubted if the Premier should be permitted to administer affairs in the interval that must elapse prior to an election.

"That is the Lieutenant-Governor's business," said Mr. Martin.

Mr. Oliver did not like the reference of the Premier, which amounted almost to a threat that supply being refused, he would have the House dissolved.

"I tell you I would ask His Honor for a dissolution under these circumstances," said Hon. Col. Prior.

"And you said yesterday that you had a promise that a dissolution would be given you in any event," said Mr. Oliver.

Mr. McPhillips opposed the granting of supply for the plain reason that if the Premier succeeded in getting supply, the Lieutenant-Governor would be justified in granting him dissolution, which otherwise he would not. The junior member for Victoria held further that in view of the Premier already being discredited, the House had no right to further trust the administration of affairs to Hon. Col. Prior.

Mr. Neill held that supply should have been granted by the House sitting during the progress of the Columbia & Western committee.

Mr. Hawthornthwaite coincided with Mr. McPhillips' view, and promised action accordingly.

Mr. Martin next rose to debate the motion.

"Now to the rescue!" shouted Mr. McPhillips.

Mr. Martin held that the duty of the House was plain. The Premier had stated that he had been promised a dissolution, but that His Honor hoped he would try and get reasonable supply through before going to the country. If His Honor had been misquoted he would no doubt have sent his contradiction to the House. The present was the last chance for the House to do the thing that the country demanded should be done. He too regretted that affairs were in the hands of Premier Prior, but under the circumstances maintained that the duty of the House was to pass reasonable supply.

In passing, the hon. member had his full share of fun over the hopeless exhibition made of itself on Wednesday by the opposition under the leadership of Mr. McBride.

Mr. McInnes did not blame the third member for Victoria for lack of faith, as many things had transpired during the past few hours to justify such disbelief. The present Premier, for example, had said not so very long ago, with great positiveness, that he would never accept the support of the first member for Vancouver. Yet what had the House seen during the past 48 hours? The Premier dependent upon the first member for Vancouver for his political existence, smiling and applauding his every word and action. He seemed indeed to have been absolutely hypnotized by the Vancouver member. His "hear, hears" punctuated everything that Mr. Martin had to say, whether the remarks made were for or against himself. Indeed, the circumstances of only the past few hours justified the junior member for Victoria in taking what the Premier had to say at a considerable discount. In the House Wednesday the Premier had made the deliberate and distinct statement that when the House met again at 2 o'clock the Lieutenant-Governor would attend to dissolve the House. Why had not the promise been redeemed? Two o'clock had come—but no appearance of His Honor. There had been no qualification of the statement of what was to occur. Then something had occurred in the meantime to change the programme, and the House had a perfect right to know what this something was. The Premier had also said on Wednesday that he would give the House no further chance to pass supply. Now he came to the House and again asked the House to pass supply. Something had happened. Either the Premier had gone to the Lieutenant-Governor or the Lieutenant-Governor had sent for the Premier. What then had passed between the Lieutenant-Governor and the Premier, that had so changed the complexion of affairs? What was the status of the Premier if supply were passed or if it were not passed? He demanded with other members to know the facts upon which the Premier based his change of front, before the granting of supply were agreed to. As to the supply proposed, he could not see why only three months' supply should be given. Necessary votes, such as for salaries, should extend for the year. To place three months' supplies at the command of the government meant merely, insofar as public works were concerned, giving campaign ammunition to the discredited government now reduced to the Premier and a single minister.

Replying to the late Provincial Secretary, Hon. Col. Prior informed the House that he could admit no right on its part to ask or to receive information as to what passed between himself and His Honor. He would adhere to the position of denial of any right of inquiry in this connection, and simply reiterate what he had said on Wednesday as to the promised dissolution. He had informed His Honor—although what Mr. McInnes had said as to his definition of position Wednesday was perfectly true—that he would again seek to have the House pass reasonable supply. There had never been any suggestion from His Honor that a dissolution would be refused in the event of the House declining to grant supply.

Mr. Curtis—If the House does grant supply, have you an assurance that you will get a dissolution?

Hon. Col. Prior—You will have to ask that question of His Honor.

Mr. Martin contended that the Premier had made this matter perfectly plain. He had informed the House no fewer than five times that he had been promised a dissolution, and surely the member for Rossland had heard. He want the assurance given further repetition?

Mr. McBride contended that Hon. Col. Prior's answers had been evasive and quibbling whenever he had been asked if His Honor had gone so far as to say a dissolution would be granted in the face of a hostile vote in the House.

The motion was finally put at 3 o'clock, and defeated on the following division:

For: Messrs. Gilmour, Hayward, Martin, Helmcken, Prentice, Prior, A. W. Smith, Ellison, Clifford, Houston, Dunsmuir, Hall, Rogers, Hunter, Dickie, Mounce—16.

Against: Messrs. Stables, E. C. Smith, Oliver, Hawthornthwaite, Neill, Gifford, Garden Fulton, Curtis, Munro, Tatlow, Green, McBride, Semlin, McPhillips, Taylor, Paterson, Wells, McInnes—16.

Hon. Col. Prior bowed to the inevitable.

"I move," he said, "that this House at its rising do stand adjourned until 3 o'clock tomorrow."

"That motion is not necessary," observed Mr. Speaker.

Again Hon. Col. Prior bowed, and left the chamber.

Before the House adjourned, Mr. Curtis had another matter which he thought should be disposed of. He referred again to the matter of that Chimney creek bridge contract, in respect to which he regarded the Premier's explanation as most unsatisfactory. He moved, after fully explaining and elaborating his position, the following resolution, which found a seconder in the member for Chilliwack:

Whereas an article appeared on the 27th May, 1903, in the Victoria Times, a responsible newspaper, in which occur the following statements:

"The News-Advertiser editorially today refers to local rumors that Premier Prior, when acting Chief Commissioner last year, awarded a contract to his firm for the cable for Chimney creek bridge. . . . On making inquiries to learn if there was any foundation for these reports, the following is gleaned from a gentleman who came from the Terminal City recently: In September last, it is alleged, a Vancouver agent was requested by the Lands and Works Department to tender for wire rope, etc., in accordance with certain specifications for Chimney creek bridge. This he sent to the department on September 30th. On December 19th he was advised by the department that the contract had been awarded to E. G. Prior & Co. The length of time that elapsed between the sending in of his tender and the advice of the department awarding the contract awakened his suspicions, so he started on a still hunt for information. Bit by bit, certain facts came to his knowledge. He learnt, as he states, that Messrs. Prior & Co. cabled for prices after the tenders had been opened, and then that a clerk from that firm had access to the tenders, which enabled them to put in a lower bid, and thus secure the contract when Mr. Wells returned."

And whereas, when the substance of the statements contained in such extracts was brought to the attention of the Hon. Premier, the Hon. E. G. Prior, on the floor of the House on the same date, he failed to give any denial of the real gravamen of the charge, to wit, that his firm had put in its offer after all the other quotations of other firms had been received, and after a clerk from his firm had access to the tenders, but he admitted that after his election to a seat in the House of Commons at Ottawa some years ago he had changed his mercantile establishment into a limited liability company, meaning into the said firm of E. G. Prior & Co., with the express object in view of tendering for government supplies.

Be it, therefore, resolved, that a committee of five members of this House, consisting of Messrs. Gilmour, Dickie, Tatlow and Curtis, be appointed to investigate forthwith the statements hereinbefore referred to, and that it is highly in the public interest that the House should not be prorogued until the report of such committee be made, with power to call for persons, books and papers and report to this House, with the evidence.

Hon. Mr. Prentice denounced the article referred to as despicable and cowardly, and took Mr. Curtis to task for having brought it forward. He did not wonder that the Premier was disposed to treat the matter with the contempt it deserved.

Mr. Wells explained to the House that the tender of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., had in this case been accepted solely because it was the lowest bid received.

"I am glad that Col. Prior is out of the House at present," said Hon. Mr. Prentice, with heat. "If I were he, I certainly would not demean myself by answering such a cowardly charge."

In turn Messrs. Neill, Hayward and Dickie objected to being named as members of the proposed committee.

Mr. McPhillips thought that the gentlemen should not be excused. It was their duty to take their share of committee work when it came to them. He asked of the Speaker if they could decline?

The answer was in the affirmative.

"If the hon. member knew the rules of the House, he would be quite aware of that," said Mr. Speaker.

Then Mr. McPhillips objected to being so addressed by the Chair.

Mr. Hall thought it was not a matter of rule but a matter of self-respect that impelled these members to decline to serve on such a committee.

Hon. Mr. Prentice thought that the refusal of these three members was sufficient justification and vindication of the Premier. He doubted if five gentlemen could be found in the House who would condescend to serve on such a committee.

Mr. Gilmour, in also objecting to serve, explained that it was not condescension that moved him in the matter at all. He had expressed a very decided opinion already, and unfavorable to the Premier, and it was for that reason that he asked to be excused, as he did not think that having already condemned the Premier in conversation, he should sit in judgment upon him. He had heard the Premier say in the House that he had had his firm formed into a joint stock company for the purpose of getting government work, and that statement if made in England would alone have been sufficient to put the maker out of politics. He would not have lasted a minute in the House of Commons after such an admission.

Mr. Tatlow felt it his duty to the Premier as well as the country to act if called upon on this committee.

Mr. McPhillips held that compulsory service upon the committee should be insisted on.

Volunteers on the government side not being available, the House proceeded, at the Speaker's suggestion, to carry the resolution and then proceed to name the committee by ballot, Messrs. Tatlow, Hawthornthwaite and Oliver, with the mover, being named.

An extra ballot for the fifth member was being taken when Hon. Col. Prior re-entered. When he had left the House, he explained, the Member for Rossland was just bringing this matter forward. He had on Wednesday given the House all the information on this subject of which he had been possessed. His answers then were, as far as he knew, quite true; as far as he knew now they were. On leaving the House he had taken a cab and driven at once to the Lieutenant-Governor to acquaint him with what had transpired in the House. Upon his arrival, His Honor had handed him a letter from Mr. Curtis to His Honor, stating that he was asking for this committee of inquiry, and he had at once told His Honor that he wanted the committee appointed to make the fullest possible inquiry. If he had done any wrong, he was ready to suffer for it—he would ask no favors of anyone. He had also made up his mind not to ask a dissolution until this matter was effectually disposed of. He would do all in his power to facilitate the work of the committee, and he urged the government members named on the committee to reconsider their decisions and serve as desired.

With the exception of Mr. Dickie, who still declined for private reasons, objections were withdrawn, and the committee as finally empowered consisted of Messrs. Helmcken, Hayward, Richard Hall, Tatlow and the mover.

Upon the suggestion of Mr. McInnes, the bill to amend the Vancouver General Hospital Act was pressed forward, this being a strictly non-contentious measure, designed to obviate unnecessary resubmission of a bylaw to the people. It was by consent introduced, passed through the first and second readings and committee, read a third time and passed; while the Victoria C. P. R. Hotel bill also went through committee and was given its third reading, being made ready for His Honor's assent.

Mr. Curtis then brought forward his resolution that "in the opinion of this House the Columbia & Western Railway Company has no right, in justice or otherwise, to a land or other subsidy for the fourth section of that railway, extending from Christina lake to Midway." The mover amplified this motion and directed particular attention to the example the ex-Attorney-General and the first member for Vancouver had set in falling over one another in their eagerness to do the C. P. R.'s service in this particular, and also in respect to the Coast-Kootenay deal. At every stage of the proceedings they appeared to be doing all that they could in the C. P. R. interest, even asking more for the company that it had the conscience to ask for itself. The Columbia & Western inquiry committee had settled that the company was not entitled to any subsidy in land or otherwise for this section of line; indeed, Sir Thomas Shaughnessy himself admitted that it had no right. The danger of having this land given had apparently passed, but he desired to have it on record that no right was recognized, either legal or moral. Certain members already stood convicted of doing what was wrong in reference to this subsidy, and as a result of such wrongdoing the cabinet today was broken up and the Premier without a following. He introduced his motion in order to see if anyone could now go to the country and have the temerity to say that this land was due to the railway company. He fearlessly reviewed the course of Messrs. Eberts and Martin in reference to this subsidy, and observed that even were their votes recorded in favor of this resolution, there was no guarantee that they would not go back on their votes, and perhaps try to secure for the Columbia & Western at some later day an even larger subsidy that they had never earned.

Mr. Martin had no objection to voting for the resolution except that he wished to supplement it with the words "in view of the admissions of Sir Thomas Shaughnessy before a committee of this House." Those admissions placed an entirely different complexion on the whole matter. He had heretofore had no hesitation in view of what had been said by Mr. Eberts as to the agreement of 1898, in view of Mr. Eberts' letter to the Chief Commissioner, and in view of what had come to his own knowledge while in office, in saying that he had, that the company was properly entitled to subsidy for this piece of road.

He had a word to say naturally of the contemptible suggestions of the member for Rossland. These he spurned, expressing entire willingness to go to the country on his position in this matter. The member for Rossland had been so anxious to villify him in this connection that he had gone from newspaper to newspaper with an interview containing these charges against him (Martin), and although perhaps no one had received more abuse from the newspapers of British Columbia than he, no respectable paper could be found that would print the interview. He had taken his oath before the committee that he had known nothing of the matters disclosed in relation to the attempt to smuggle through a claim to blocks 4,593 and 4,594 under cover of bill 87 of last session; he had understood that bill merely as a fair reinstatement of undisputed rights. Whatever the member for Rossland might say could not change this fact. It was perhaps true that that member in the House and stated that the powers of the company were enlarged under this bill, and it would be possible under it for the railway to gain possession of those two East Kootenay blocks. Like the rest of the House, he was not in the habit of listening to Mr. Curtis' speeches. It was, he believed, the custom of the members when Mr. Curtis began to speak, to seek the lobbies. And no one could blame them. Personally he would as soon listen to a crazy man from New Westminster as the member from Rossland. That member was always ready to dig down in the dirt and slime in the hope of getting something to stick to members of the House. (Hon. Col. Prior: Hear, hear.) He had, for example, launched most serious charges against the former Premier, Mr. Dunsmuir, to the effect that he had used his office for his personal ends. Those charges had, upon investigation, been dissolved in smoke. While Mr. Dunsmuir was not perhaps cut out for the position of a government leader and had to take the word of his colleagues for much in politics, and while his action in regard to strikes, etc., might not be approved by many, there were few, at least, but would acquit him of the suggestion or thought of using his office for personal ends. He did not know what party Mr. Curtis now belonged to—probably to the Curtis party only. He had tried all parties, Liberal, Labor, Progressives etc., but was not wanted by any. He himself was glad to lose him as a supporter. With the election coming it was to be hoped that it would accomplish one good for the country—in relegating the member for Rossland back to his proper avocation, boosting bogus mining schemes.

Mr. Eberts opposed the resolution. He traced the history of railway matters from the inception of the strong railway policy of the Turner government in 1897, with the object of developing the great potentialities of the province, down to the present time, maintaining step by step that all documents as well as the testimony of successive governments showed the recognition of an agreement by which this particular subsidy should be given—which was in fact asserted as well in a letter from Sir Thomas Shaughnessy to Mr. Martin during that gentleman's Attorney-Generalship. He still held that there was a solemn agreement entitling the railway company to subsidy for this section, and he still held that since the Columbia & Western company had performed its portion of the contract, neither the government nor the legislature had a right to repudiate that contract. Such action was not in accord with the ethics of British justice. It was not in fairness to the company which had redeemed its contract and done much to develope the great district which its railway served. He, too, had a word of condemnation for the Rossland member, who for political reasons, was always catering to the American interests and displaying marked antagonism to all things Canadian, the Canadian Pacific most particularly. Mr. Eberts paid a glowing tribute to this national line and what it had done for British Columbia, in sharp contrast with the policy of the American lines into the Kootenay country which are merely sapping the strength of the province. He considered the company entitled to its grant referred to in the resolution, and held that the House should not, in British justice, pass the resolution.

Mr. Oliver replied in a distinctly dignified and argumentative speech, in which he held that the history of the governments of the past few years showed that political expediency at all times compelled its railway policy. Item by item he denied Mr. Eberts' case for the railway company, pointing out particularly that the Columbia & Western had given up its rights, that this had been confirmed by Sir Thomas Shaughnessy and by the application for extension of time. He urged that by the substitution of cash for land aid the province had lost the guarantee of the company to build to Pentiction, and asked why it was that the company had afterwards been so extremely anxious to get particular lands in lieu of money. He contrasted Mr. Martin's position as to the grants in 1900 and in 1902, maintaining that he was unconsistent, and closed with a forceful reference to bill 87, by this time well understood by the House and the people of British Columbia.

Mr. McBride moved the adjournment of the debate shortly before the house adjourned for the day.

(From Saturday's Daily.)

With no one in actual control of the House, it was small wonder that yesterday's proceedings in the legislature took a rambling and most discursive character, the debates—based upon the report of the committee in the Curtis' charges against Premier Prior, and upon the motion for adjournment—covering much foreign ground, and being intended in large part for the electorate rather than the House. Crowded galleries, when the House assembled, again testified to the intensity of public interest in the long-drawn-out crisis, nor was the tension relieved when the business was introduced with provokingly routine matters. Mr. Rogers presented a petition from certain mining men of Cariboo with respect to the Crown granting of placer claims, and after waiting a few moments, apparently for some statement from the First Minister, Mr. Oliver next took the floor upon a question of privilege.

He had been informed, he said, that a large amount of money had been paid out of the provincial treasury on account of the Point Ellice bridge, without proper vouchers; and in view of the extraordinary circumstances of the present he thought the House would pardon a deviation from practice to enable him to request an explanation of the Finance Minister.

Mr. Speaker promptly ruled that this was not privilege at all. Such off-hand interrogation could only be permitted by unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Oliver accordingly moved for the consent of the House, and having obtained it, pressed his question. If the charge were true, he asked what the amount of the payment was, when it was made, and whether or not proper vouchers had been taken?

Hon. Mr. Prentice replied, speaking from memory, that he believed a sum of $30,000 had been paid the city of Victoria—he could not give the exact date, but it was something about six months ago. There was due authority for the payment, obtained from the House last session, and he felt sure that proper vouchers must have been taken.

Mr. Oliver insisted that his information was to the contrary effect, and Capt. Tatlow supported this information.

Hon. Mr. Prentice then recalled the circumstances of the transaction. The amount had been paid, if he remembered aright, two months or thereabouts, before it was actually earned, by necessary expenditures, and in consequence the Chief Commissioner had declined to initial the voucher in the usual way. He had himself assumed the responsibility in view of exceptional circumstances, and in consequence of special representations made by prominent Victorians, among them Mr. McPhillips, Mayor Hayward, Mr. Helmcken, and he believed Premier Prior.

This matter being thus disposed of, Mr. Hall, as chairman, presented the report of the special committee investigating the charges against Hon. Col. Prior in connection with the securing of a certain contract in connection with the Chimney Creek bridge. This report, which goes no further than offering a resume of the evidence without comment, reads:

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE RE TENDERS FOR WIRE CABLE FOR CHIMNEY CREEK BRIDGE.

To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia:

Sir,—We, your select committee appointed to inquire into all matters connected with the granting of a contract to supply wire cable for Chimney Creek bridge, beg leave to report as follows:

1. That Mr. Wells, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, was absent from his department from the 24th of October till early in December, 1902.

2. That Hon. Colonel Prior was acting Chief Commissioner in his absence.

3. That previous to Mr. Wells' departure, certain firms suggested by Mr. Waddell, were communicated with, asking for bids for wire cable to be used in construction of Chimney Creek bridge. Those bids were received from time to time, and not being endorsed on the envelope as tenders, were opened and treated as ordinary communications. In all, quotations were received from four firms, as follows:

October 3—Dominion Wire Rope Co., Montreal, $5,917.

October 4—Dominion Wire Rope Co., Montreal, $5,581.

October 6—Darling & Co., Vancouver, $3,881.

November 8—Darling & Co., Vancouver, $2,450.

September 30—W. A. McLennan & Co., Vancouver, $5,225.

October 27—A. Leschen & Sons, St. Louis, $3,380.

4. A schedule summarizing the above tenders was submitted to the acting Chief Commissioner, on November 12, 1902, by Mr. Gamble, who asked for instruction as to the awarding of the contract.

5. The acting Chief Commissioner wished to know why the firm of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., had not been asked to make a quotation.

6. The acting Commissioner instructed Mr. Gamble to hold the matter in abeyance until the firm of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., were given an opportunity to bid, in consequence of which the firm of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., sent in a bid on December 6, of $3,216.39, being $170 less than any of the former quotations.

7. The firm of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., were notified on the 12th of December of the acceptance of their bid.

8. The condition attached to the firm's request to send quotations was that the cable should be delivered not later than March 30th, 1903, at Ashcroft, in order to ensure transportation before the breaking up of the roads. No guarantee was given by E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., although they promised to endeavor to make delivery as near as possible to that date.

9. The firm of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., was so incorporated in 1891, with Colonel Prior holding a controlling interest in that firm.

10. The acting Chief Commissioner on the 15th of November, requested Mr. Gamble to send in his office in the department of Mines, the papers in connection with bids for wire cable, and as Mr. Gamble was going away, he (Mr. Gamble) wrote to his draughtsman, Mr. Cookson, to take these papers to Colonel Prior, which Mr. Cookson did about the 17th of November, 1902.

11. There is a conflict of testimony on the following points:

(a) Mr. Cookson swore that the only document he took to Colonel Prior after getting Mr. Gamble's letter, was the schedule of tenders that Mr. Gamble had first placed before Colonel Prior.

(b) Colonel Prior swore that specifications for the cable accompanied the schedule handed him by Mr. Cookson, and that he showed only such specifications to Mr. Schwengers, an employee of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., who was looking after the tendering for the wire cable for such company. Mr. Schwengers also swore that he saw the specifications only in Colonel Prior's office.

(c) Mr. Gamble, on the other hand, swore that he instructed Mr. Cookson by note to send all the papers to Colonel Prior.

12. Colonel Prior swore that he had never communicated the other firm's bids to any member or employee of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., which was corroborated by Messrs. Wynne, Schwengers and Matthews, members and employees of such company; nor had he, Colonel Prior, assisted in any way in preparing the firm's bids.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

(Signed) RICHARD HALL,
Chairman.

Dated the 20th day of May, A. D., 1903.

The reading of the report was followed by a motion for its adoption, by Capt. Tatlow, and a snappy debate in which the Premier's position was sharply criticized.

Mr. Oliver maintained that the evidence showed that the Premier had certainly used his official position, whether legitimately or not, according to the strict interpretation of ethics, to secure a contract for the firm in which he is majority stockholder. He urged not only the adoption of the report, but the amendment of the statute to prevent a recurrence of such conditions of practice in the government departments, which must be resented by business tenderers.

Messrs. McBride and McPhillips followed in condemnation of the Premier's action as disclosed by the committee report, and Messrs. Martin and Houston inferentially defended the First Minister, contending that he had done nothing that he was not entitled to do despite the assertions and inferences of oversensitive purists of the opposition.

Mr. Curtis held that passing lightly over such a transaction would be creating a perilous precedent which might be taken advantage of to the serious loss of the country, should an unscrupulous man secure the position which the Premier occupied at the time this episode presented itself. The member for Rossland held that it was especially desirable that when a minister of the Crown did assist in securing a contract for the firm or corporation in which he was interested, the transaction should be particularly free from the possibility of criticism, by open tender and in the usual manner. It was futile for Premier Prior to plead, as he had, that despite the fact that he had seen the figures of other tenderers in advance, his firm were not acquainted with them, as since he was himself the largest shareholder it would be held in law that the firm was fully advised. He thought it would be a wise thing for public men to avoid all appearance of evil.

Mr. Hall, as chairman of the investigation committee, saw no justification for condemnation of the Premier. It was quite evident that the bid of Prior & Co., Ltd., had been honestly made, as if there had been the slightest thought of covering up the affair it might easily have been put in through a commission agent. As it was the country had saved money.

Hon. Mr. Prentice thought the matter too trivial for serious consideration, and also urged that through the action of the Premier the country had been saved $170.

Mr. Monro and Capt. Tatlow denied the triviality of the principle involved, the former disputing also the contention that the country had saved money. As a matter of fact the goods were not yet delivered, and the extra transportation costs in consequence of non-delivery in the required time will double the amount of reputed saving. Captain Tatlow was quite willing to absolve the Premier of personal dishonesty.

Mr. Hawthornthwaite accepted the incident as a natural result of the present competitive business system, based upon the spoliation of the toiler, and hoped to see the constitution amended so as to debar members of the government from using their official positions to further their private concerns.

Premier Prior was very brief in making the House aware of his position. When on Thursday he had returned to the House to find the motion for this committee being debated, he had asked his friends to act on the committee, and do all in their power to facilitate the investigation, because he had seen their was a certain amount of diffidence on their part in accepting the service proposed by the mover for the committee. He had himself attended the sitting of the committee, and had given his evidence freely and candidly. He was not now going to attempt to defend himself before the House. The evidence and the report would be before the House, as well as before His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, and he would have to accept their judgment thereon. Other members, on the opposite side of the House, had done him the credit to say that they did not believe he had been guilty of any personal dishonesty, intentional or otherwise; he would say himself that he might have been unfortunate in his action, but certainly had not been dishonorable in any fair sense. His firm, as any other incorporated limited, liability company, had had a perfect right to tender for the supplies in question. He had testified on oath and others in the firm of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., had testified also, that he had not communicated by word or written suggestion, nor had he hinted in any way, of the prices submitted by other bidders. Nor were the quotations tenders in the proper sense. They were mere quotations, which came in and were opened with the daily mail, and which lay open in the basket for some considerable time. He had not awarded the contract to his firm, nor had he asked Mr. Wells to so award it. The contract had been secured for the substantial reason that the price quoted was most advantageous for the province. All that he had done was to ask that the firm in which he was a shareholder should have a chance to tender. If he had done wrong in this he was the one to suffer. Whatever differences of opinion people might have with him in politics, he thought that when he went on the stand and pledged his sworn word—his unsworn word was generally regarded as good—the majority would believe what he had to say. He repeated that there had been no communication to his firm of the prices offered by other firms, and he submitted as a business man that had his firm in tendering known the other figures they would not have been likely to underbid to the extent of $170, when $5 or $10 would have been equally sufficient for the purpose of getting the contract. He could not interpret the report as condemnatory.

The debate closed with the unanimous passage of the resolution, having been enlivened by at least one lapsus linguae which was immensely appreciated by House and galleries.

It was during Mr. Richard Hall's speech, and in commenting upon the extreme morality of opposition members, he had said that with respect to the Columbia & Western lands grants matter, on which so very much had been made, he was convinced that certain prominent members of the opposition were as deep in the mud as either of the dismissed ministers had been in the mire.

There was an insistent call for names, which brought none from the Victoria city member, and Mr. Oliver took the point of order that the culpability of members in connection with the Columbia & Western grants matter had nothing to do with the motion to adopt this committee report.

"I was merely showing," said Mr. Hall, "that certain members are very willing to see the beam in their neighbor's eye, and not the mote that is in their own."

Whereat the House convulsed itself.

This motion being adopted, Mr. McBride asked for a statement from the First Minister as to his own position and that of the House. How long was the present indefinite state of affairs to continue, with no one really in control of the House, a government reduced to the Premier and a single colleague, and want of confidence twice emphasized. He thought that while supply should not be granted for very obvious reasons already discussed, the House might pass through their third readings certain non-contentious measures of importance, the principle of which had already been passed upon, and then the session should end.

Hon. Col. Prior agreed that the House should not attempt to transact business under present conditions, yet was not in a position to make a statement to the House at the moment. It was his intention to present the report of this committee with the evidence to His Honor, and leave it and himself in His Honor's hands. Admitting that he could no longer control the House, he could only announce to the House His Honor's pleasure at the earliest possible moment. As His Honor would have to read the report and evidence in connection with this latest inquiry, he proposed that the rules be waived in order that the evidence might go direct to His Honor after being read over by the committee, and that the House should adjourn until Monday.

After further desultory debate, and the emphasizing by Mr. McPhillips of the fact that His Honor should not be permitted to judge the Prior administration only upon the single incident of this inquiry, but primarily upon the emphasized loss of confidence in the House, this motion prevailed, the House adjourning until Monday.

# PETITIONS FROM ALL QUARTERS

## Legislature Urged To Consider Recommendations of Mining Association.

Mr. Rogers, M. P. P., presented to the House yesterday the following petitions from the members of the Provincial Mining Association of British Columbia: The Victoria and Vancouver clearing houses and 12 banks; H. Byers and 58 others of Nelson; the Mayor of Trail and 54 others; W. S. Keith and 42 others of Greenwood; H. C. Bellinger and others of Crofton; Carl D. Davis and 361 others of Rossland; the Vancouver Board of Trade; H. Boursin and 21 others of Stanley; John Brody and 10 others of Quesnel Forks; B. A. Lescelles and 43 others of Barkerville; Mike Minton and 68 others of Williams Creek; J. B. Hobson and 42 others of Bullion; G. H. Hamilton and 17 others of Beaver Lake Valley; F. Rogers and 14 others of Big Lake; Ed. McKinley and 11 others of Lac La Hache.

The petition memorializes the government to give attention to the representations of the Provincial Mining Association of British Columbia, that it is vital to the interests of the mining population of the province that the suggestions and the amendments proposed be considered and adopted by the House at the earliest possible moment.


# Hope For Consumptives

HOW THE RAVAGES OF THIS SCOURGE MAY BE STAYED.

Statistics Prove That More Deaths Occur From Consumption Than From All Other Contagious Diseases Combined—How Best to Combat the Disease.

The ravages of consumption throughout Canada is something appalling. In the province of Ontario, where statistics are most complete, it is certain that not been dishonorable in any fair sense. His firm, as any other incorporated limited, liability company, had had a perfect right to tender for the supplies in question. He had testified on oath and others in the firm of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., had testified also, that he had not communicated by word or written suggestion, nor had he hinted in any way, of the prices submitted by other bidders. Nor were the quotations tenders in the proper sense. They were mere quotations, which came in and were opened with the daily mail, and which lay open in the basket for some considerable time. He had not awarded the contract to his firm, nor had he asked Mr. Wells to so award it. The contract had been secured for the substantial reason that the price quoted was most advantageous for the province. All that he had done was to ask that the firm in which he was a shareholder should have a chance to tender. If he had done wrong in this he was the one to suffer. Whatever differences of opinion people might have with him in politics, he thought that when he went on the stand and pledged his sworn word—his unsworn word was generally regarded as good—the majority would believe what he had to say. He repeated that there had been no communication to his firm of the prices offered by other firms, and he submitted as a business man that had his firm in tendering known the other figures they would not have been likely to underbid to the extent of $170, when $5 or $10 would have been equally sufficient for the purpose of getting the contract. He could not interpret the report as condemnatory.

The debate closed with the unanimous passage of the resolution, having been enlivened by at least one lapsus linguae which was immensely appreciated by House and galleries.

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# That Bridge Cable Order

## Latest Select Committee Meets to Take Important Testimony.

## Four Witnesses Are Examined Re Chimney Creek Contract.

## The Enquiry Closes This Morning---Finding This Afternoon.

(From Friday's Daily.)

Having just completed their protracted experience with one select committee inquiry, the members of the legislature did not attend in any large numbers the investigation which opened last evening—this time to deal with the charge against Premier Prior, of having improperly secured a government contract for the firm in which he is interested—E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd.—in connection with the Chimney Creek bridge.

The committee chose Mr. Richard Hall as chairman, and Mr. Hayward as secretary, the other members being Messrs. Helmcken, Tatlow and Curtis, the latter as mover for the inquiry. Mrs. Blyth was engaged as official stenographer, and during the evening four witnesses were examined, of the five whose testimony is expected to complete the case.

Of these four witnesses the first was Mr. W. C. Wells, until Wednesday Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works. Mr. Wells deposed that during October and November, 1902, he had been absent from the city, and Hon. Col. Prior had in his place been acting Chief Commissioner. Just before he (Wells) left the city, on the advice of the engineer, Mr. Waddell, his department had sent out to the four firms capable of tendering for such supplies, requests for bids for the wire cable required for the new Chimney creek bridge, then building.

The usual practice, it was explained by the witness, was followed, it not being customary to advertise for tenders. The invariable rule instead was to send to the firms considered by the engineer as most reliable, and in the best position to furnish the supplies, get their several prices, and when all had been received, award the contract to the lowest bidder, all things being equal. Mr. Gamble's instructions in this case had been to follow the customary procedure.

When he (Wells) had returned home in November, he had received from Mr. Gamble the schedule of bids, and that of E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., being the lowest, he had at once awarded the contract to that firm as a matter of course.

Mr. Gamble on being sworn deposed to having duly received in the first instance four tenders, chiefly from American firms. He had taken these tenders to Hon. Col. Prior, as acting Chief Commissioner, and requested a decision as to which should receive the contract. Hon. Col. Prior had looked the bids over and remarked, "I see you have not given E. G. Prior & Co. a chance to tender."

The witness had replied in the negative. He had ascribed two reasons for not doing so. In the first place they had not looked upon E. G. Prior & Co. as a firm specially capable of handling this particular class of supplies, although knowing them to represent an English wire goods firm. In the second place he felt at liberty to say to the Premier as a friend that he regarded it as scarcely the proper thing for the firm in which a member of the government was so prominently interested—that member of the government being at the time the acting Chief Commissioner—to put in a tender.

Hon. Col. Prior had not agreed with this view of the case. E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., was a limited liability company, the Premier had pointed out, and should not be debarred; he could see no reason why they should be.

Witness had answered that that was a matter of course for the Premier to decide for himself.

Hon. Col. Prior had intimated that he would like to have the tenders held over until his firm had had opportunity to put in a tender. A few days later the Premier had telephoned to him that he wanted all the papers in connection with this matter sent over to his (Prior's) office, and witness had thereupon instructed Mr. Cookson, his clerk, to take the papers, including specifications, tenders, etc., to the Premier's office.

On his (Gamble's) return from Bella Coola he had found a tender from E. G. Prior & Co., Ltd., at a figure $170 lower than the lowest of the former tenders. He had then added the name of E. G. Prior & Co. to the schedule and upon Mr. Wells' return submitted the schedule. He was positive that he had never notified the Prior firm to tender and the first he knew of the matter was when he had received the request by telephone to send all the papers to Hon. Col. Prior's office.

Hon. Col. Prior, being called, substant