

Shuffles Statistics.

Again he states on page 27 that land purchases in 1914 had fallen to 45,000 acres, while "pre-emptions for the three years surrounding 1914" (whatever that means) was 1,300,000 acres. Again he shuffles from one set of statistics to another, for the minister of lands' reports show plainly that in the last three years the sales were 983,534 acres and the pre-emptions Crown-granted were only 298,208 acres. (Applause.)

But listen to this from page 28: "I have this further statement to make, and I make it in all seriousness here, that no denial has ever been made to the statement made by the honourable minister of lands in a public statement that we have today 90,000,000 acres of lands under reserve for the pre-emptor. There is nobody who has ever denied that." Well, ladies and gentlemen, it was 93,000,000 acres that the minister of lands stated was reserved, but 3,000,000 doesn't matter. (Laughter.) Anyhow, we denied it in "The Crisis." I denied it on every platform I have occupied throughout the province; the Dominion census returns denied it, for they give the total possible farm lands of this province as only 22,618,000 acres. But last and greatest of all, the Hon. W. J. Bowser, attorney-general of British Columbia, denied it. (Applause.) Here it is in the Daily Province of May 7th of this year: "Nor does it mean that all the land in the 93,000,000 acres is fit for pre-emption, but that throughout the whole extent of the 93,000,000 acres any land suitable for pre-emption is available for settlers." (Laughter.) As I pointed out before, he might as well have said, "The whole province, from the Illicillewaet Glacier down to my oyster beds, is reserved for pre-emption; and all the man who wants a pre-emption has to do is to find it. It's somewhere, and if it isn't there it is somewhere else." (Loud laughter.) Yet this is the kind of argument which the News-Advertiser asserts has absolutely killed "The Crisis in B. C." Why, gentlemen, the thing is only beginning to live (applause), and if you will bear with me a little longer this "best possible defence" of the government will be ready for burial when I get through with it. (Loud applause.) I assure you I shall condense it all I can.

The Heinze Lands.

Now, I want right here, and in the frankest manner possible, to say that we have found one real error in our pamphlet. We discovered it long before Mr. Bowser made his speech, and we have not the slightest desire to

hide any mistake we have made, so I am going to show where the one-third of one of our statements is wrong. On page 6 of "The Crisis" we say that the government bought back worthless lands at 40 cents an acre from the railway companies in the neighborhood of Nelson, and that the late Augustus Heinze was bought out at this rate. Now, it is a mistake to say that Heinze's interest in these lands was purchased, and I make Mr. Bowser and his followers an honest apology for this error. (Applause.) It is the one exception that proves the rule; and if you read the complicated Railway Subsidy Act and Agreement of 1912, you will easily see how we made the mistake. But I have to offset that with something else, which further illustrates the attorney-general's methods of argument. (Laughter.)

I will try to state the whole case in the fewest possible sentences. On pages 11 to 14 of his speech Mr. Bowser asserts that the government bought 931,786 acres of land from the C. P. R. and that P. Augustus Heinze held a half interest in 583,000 acres. He says this was bought at the cheap price of 40 cents an acre at the time when the government was "assessing and collecting taxes at the rate of 50 cents an acre," therefore we are entirely wrong when we say that these lands were worthless. He is deeply offended because we suggest that his being solicitor for Mr. Heinze in any way affected him in doing his duty by this province. He asserts that Heinze's land was not taxable at all till at least 1912, and claims great credit for passing a law which caused Heinze to be taxed in 1914.

Investigated Scandal.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have here the government records, including the Railway Subsidy and Lands Purchase Act of 1912, the Agreement of sale between the C. P. R. and B. C. government, the Journals of the legislature for 1903 with full report and all the evidence of the select committee which investigated the scandal connected with these very lands; the Journals for 1906, and other documents, which conclusively prove that Mr. Bowser is absolutely wrong in every statement he has made on the points I have quoted. (Applause.) Even his figures are wildly astray. Here are the actual facts which I am prepared to discuss with Mr. Bowser himself. (Loud applause.) The government bought from the C. P. R. in 1912, certain lands originally granted to the Columbia and Western railway in the Boundary country, and to the B. C. Southern in the Crow's Nest