

counsel employed either discussed or approved the action of the government in the whole transaction. (Prolonged applause.) And I assert again that the attorney-general has deliberately avoided answering our charge. (Applause.) Now, ladies and gentlemen, I shall discuss no further points in the speech. I will only point out that this "spokesman of the government" has not even mentioned section 5 of our pamphlet which deals with the terrible scandal of company promoters in British Columbia and Mr. Price Ellison's connection with some of them while Minister of Finance. ("Hear, hear!") He has not mentioned section 6 on "Public Accounts" which shows that the last five years have exhausted the surplus of the previous seven, and over \$5,500,000 besides. He is now Minister of Finance and might have explained why the public debt is being doubled, and why \$13,000,000 of arrears on land sales kept out of the provincial balance sheet. Sir Richard McBride informs us that these arrears are upwards of \$15,000,000. Mr. Bowser did not discuss the fact that these arrears are more than double the arrears due to the Ottawa government for all its sales throughout the Dominion. This is proved by the auditor-general's report on page 44. (Applause.)

Evaded Serious Statements.

He did not discuss our section on railway guarantees which points out the coming burden of \$3,500,000 yearly interest. In fact, as a gentleman who sat behind him on the platform said to me next morning, "He did not touch one-tenth of the serious statements in the pamphlet." (Applause.) No! He preferred to waste time throwing discredit on Mr. Cotsworth and ridiculing the Ministerial Union. He even found time to waste on me (laughter), and added three falsehoods to the poisonous bomb his friends had constructed to finish me. I had made him a present of it at our previous meeting in this hall, but he did not scruple to throw it from the police-filled trenches of the Orpheum theatre. (Laughter.) He says I lived in Elkhorn, Manitoba, from 1896 to 1911. I was there eleven months in 1903. He says I got \$1,089 from the Ottawa government. If that is so they still owe me about \$640, for all I got for six months work on the platform in Ireland was \$450, and anything over that was travelling expenses for which they demanded vouchers for every cent. He says I was appointed by "Preston of machine-fame." I was appointed by

the Interior department at Ottawa, then under the very man whose name was cheered by Mr. Bowser's friends when he mentioned it—Sir Clifford Sifton. But even Mr. Sifton did not ask me to produce a card of membership in the political association which supported him. (Applause.) The question of political leaning was never suggested, but if I were going to do similar public service to British Columbia today I would have to do like everyone else, even the man who is starving through unemployment, and produce my ticket of membership in the Conservative Association. (Loud applause.) Over two years ago, at Brockton Point on the 12th of July, I stood on the platform alongside Mr. H. H. Stevens to speak on Irish affairs and my first words declared emphatically that I was neither Liberal nor Conservative, but an independent citizen who would think for himself and vote according to conscience for whatever party best served the best interests of our country. (Applause.) And I defy Mr. Bowser, or any of his supporters, or the author of this false editorial printed here on the cover of this Orpheum speech without my reply, to discover word or action of mine which has since contradicted that public statement. (Loud applause.)

A Confirmation of Claims.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I have done. I thank you for your splendid patience and courtesy. I have trespassed heavily upon both. But I think I have shown you that the "best possible defense" of the government, put forward by the only man who has had the courage to face the question at all, is not a refutation but a confirmation of all we have claimed in "The Crisis in B. C." ("Hear, hear!") I have shown you how carefully we have verified all our statements. I have not asked you to accept my word in a single instance tonight. I have shown you the documents, given chapter and page of the government records and other authorities. I have proved that, in spite of the fact that he has access to all the records at Victoria, the attorney-general is entirely wrong in his figures, that he is guilty of gross misstatements of fact, and that he has completely evaded the great issues at the heart of this whole question. (Applause.) I claim, therefore, that the people of the province of British Columbia have greater reason today than ever for the most thorough and most impartial investigation into public affairs that it is possible to institute. (Loud and prolonged applause.)