(From Friday's Daily Edition.)

Martin Against Finance Minister

Charges Formulated in the House and Motion for Committee Refused.

Mr. Cotton's Explanation of the Incidents Involved—Not A Party Move.

THURSDAY, Feb. 15.

The Speaker having taken the chair at 2 o'clock, prayers were read by Rev. W. Leslie Clay.

PETITIONS.

Petitions were read and received from the following:

A. D. Menzies and others, residents of West Kootenay district, with respect to Sabbath observance.

Henry Watts and others, re school house on lot 7, section 42, Lake district.

The petition of John McDowell, requesting a pension, was ruled out of order, it not having been signed, as required by the rules, by the presenting member, Mr. Kellie.

SETTING HIMSELF RIGHT.

Mr. Ellison, addressing himself to a question of privilege, corrected the Colonist report of his remarks on the redistribution question. He had been credited with saying that he would support the Premier's amendment and the resolution. He had said he could not support the amendment and would vote for the original resolution.

THE LETTER LOCATED.

Hon. Mr. Hume laid on the table a further return with respect to the eight-hour law and its operation. This was the document, he explained, that the junior member for Esquimalt had complained of as missing.

PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS ACT.

A bill to amend the Provincial Elections Act was introduced by Mr. McPhillips and received its first reading, being set for second reading at the next sitting of the house.

FINANCE MINISTER ON TRIAL.

Mr. Joseph Martin's resolution respecting the Finance Minister was then called. The mover said:

In moving this resolution I propose as briefly as possible to deal with the three matters which are referred to. The first matter is that "the present Minister of Finance and Agriculture and Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, while acting as secretary for the Executive Council of this province, deliberately falsified the minutes of the said Executive Council."

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is not the custom, so far as I am aware, in the other provinces or in the Dominion to keep minutes of the executive council, but I understand it has always been the custom here to do so, and the present government, at any rate while I was a member of it, carried on the same practice. The Finance Minister at that time was the secretary who kept these minutes. The practice was to have the minutes written out, just the same as a municipal council does, and at the following meeting of the council to have those minutes read, and approved if found correct. Now, this charge is that the honorable gentleman upon one occasion deliberately falsified these minutes—that is, wrote down something as being a part of the minutes and which was not correct. Of course, Mr. Speaker, having incorrect minutes may honestly occur to any secretary whose duty it is to keep the same, and no doubt it very frequently does occur that a secretary makes a mistake, and that is the object, of course, of having the copy approved before it is considered in form. In this case I charge that there is no possibility of considering that the writing that was put into the book was a mistake unless we should assume that the honorable gentleman is absolutely stupid and cannot understand what was being done and what went on upon the occasion upon which he kept the records or purposed so to do. The matter to which I refer is in connection with what is known as the Deadman's Island matter at Vancouver. The matter came up before this government when I was a member of it and upon the occasion to which I have referred—the date I am not able to give, I think it was some time in May—and was discussed for a whole afternoon. Nothing was done; no conclusion was arrived at, and the matter was adjourned when I was a member of it and upon the occasion to which I have referred—the date I am not able to give, I think it was some time in May—and was discussed for a whole afternoon. Nothing was done; no conclusion was arrived at, and the matter was adjourned when I was a member of the government. There was a meeting of the whole cabinet. I went to Vancouver, and the next thing I heard in regard to this matter was that in response to a telegram sent by the Mayor of Vancouver, the Finance Minister had answered that the government had decided on a particular policy with regard to this question. I immediately wired the Finance Minister and also the Premier, pointing out that the government had not, so far as I was aware, decided upon any policy with regard to this matter. It was then explained by the Finance Minister that in the absence of other members of the government—I think all were absent except the Premier and himself—those two gentlemen had undertaken to decide the policy of the government with regard to this matter. Now, at the time that this statement was made by the Finance Minister that this policy had been arrived at by the Premier and himself—something of course which they had no right in the world to do, Mr. Speaker, and as to which there was no urgency whatsoever, because this was a mere question by the Mayor of Vancouver, who had no right to ask the question—at the time that statement was made there was an entry in this minute book that the government had decided as a whole government—that is, the minute of a record at which we were all present—that the government had decided to do the very thing which the Finance Minister telegraphed to Mr. Garden was the policy of the government. Now, of course if the government as a whole had, at the meeting to which I refer, decided that to have been the policy of the government, it would not have been necessary, and would have been in fact absurd, for Mr. Semlin and Mr. Cotton to take the question up again and decide it in their way. Of course it would have been very absurd indeed for them to decide it in the same way as the five of us had on a previous occasion. This entry on the minute book purporting to be a record of what was done came up for consideration at a meeting at which I was not present, and was objected to and was not passed. It was held over until there might be a full meeting of the cabinet. On the first occasion that there was a full meeting of the cabinet the entry was scratched out and practically admitted to be incorrect.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these are the simple facts with regard to that matter and of course, while there is no statute which provides that the executive council should keep minutes, while minutes are kept they are supposed to be correct and to be binding on the ministers, and it would be perfectly idle for any one minister to protest that he did not agree to a certain course if that course was found spread on the minutes of the council. Sometimes it happens, Mr. Speaker, naturally in a body of that kind, that a matter comes up, you might say incidentally, and is not much alluded to and under such circumstances it would be very easy indeed for the one member keeping the minutes to make a mistake as to what did occur and what had been done. But this was a very different occasion from that. This was an occasion when the whole afternoon, probably three or four hours, was consumed in debating and discussing this matter, and I say that unless we are to assume that the hon. gentleman could sit there all that afternoon and take a part in what went on and honestly believe at the end of that time that something was done that was not done at all—that I say is an assumption that no resident in this province will make. The assumption must be that a gentleman of the Finance Minister's intelligence, sitting there on a matter of grave importance; and a matter which was very much before the public at the time, must have known that the fact was that the matter was adjourned, that no conclusion was arrived at; he must have been aware of all that, and it is most significant, Mr. Speaker, that the policy which has appeared since—and of course I am not at liberty to say what stand the hon. gentlemen took there—but from the declarations of policy since, it seems that the action decided upon was that set out in this minute as having been the determination of the government. What the minute set out was just as the despatch of the hon. minister to Mr. Gordon stated; that the government had decided that it would not in any way deal with or consider the question of the erection of a mill upon Deadman's Island, or have any dealings with Mr. Ludgate in regard to his lease, until the courts had disposed of the question in dispute between the Dominion and the Provincial governments as to who was the owner of the land in question. That was the falsified record to which I refer and that was the substance of the despatch sent by the hon. gentleman to Mr. Garden, and which when "called down" by myself he explained was not the decision of anyone except the hon. Premier and himself. Now these matters are very easy of inquiry and susceptible of proof in every respect as to what I have said and I do not propose to enlarge upon the character of an act of that kind if the facts are as I have alleged them to be.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the next matter is contained in section 2 of the resolution.

Mr. Martin read the section and continued:

I wish it distinctly understood in reference to this matter that I do not consider the public in any way concerned in the dealings between Mr. Gordon and the honorable gentleman. I understand, at least I heard it stated, that the judgment which was the result of the action brought by Mr. Gordon against the honorable gentleman has been in some way compromised or settled between the parties. The public has no interest whatever with the relationship between those two gentlemen except in so far as it bears on this judgment is concerned, and the honorable gentleman's connection therewith. I understand that when Mr. Gordon went to England he left his power of attorney with the honorable gentleman, and he was to take charge of Mr. Gordon's interests until he should return. When Mr. Gordon did return he found that the property had been disposed of. Action was brought upon the honorable gentleman refusing to give an account of his disposal of the property, and this resulted in the judgment against the honorable gentleman. After that judgment had been obtained proceedings were taken, as provided by law, and an examination of the judgment debtor took place. Now, the law under which the examination took place, and under which the honorable gentleman went to gaol rather than answer the question as to what he had done with that property, derives its force and power from this legislature. The honorable gentleman has been since that time continuously a member of this house, but he has not in any way sought to question the propriety of that law, or attempted in any way to have it changed. We may assume, therefore, that he does not dispute the right of this legislature by which a man who has a judgment against him is bound to answer any question of the court regarding his property, what he has done with property he had, what property he still has, and everything of that kind. The excuse given by the honorable gentleman for refusing to answer the question, for refusing to answer which he was committed to gaol, was that he could not answer without disclosing the affairs of other persons. Of course, the effect of the law is that this refusal is a crime—contempt of court—for which a man can be punished by imprisonment. The legislature has not considered that it is any answer or any excuse for a person in the position in which the honorable gentleman was at that time, to refuse to answer because it might affect the rights or privileges or property of other persons. This was not recognized by the statutes, and the honorable gentleman himself knows that such modification of the law should not be made. Therefore he deliberately accepted the position of a criminal and went to gaol rather than tell the examiners what he had done with the property of Mr. Gordon; he sheltered himself under that provision of the law and went to gaol. That is the position as I understand it with regard to this matter. Nor is there any difficulty in getting the facts in this case; they are on the records of the Supreme court, which records are fully in the control of this house.

The next matter is with reference to the honorable gentleman's career in the state of Colorado. Mr. Martin here read the section of the resolution bearing on this particular. Now, he continued, every person in the community has, and I myself have, the fullest sympathy with any person who gets into financial difficulties. I myself have been on the brink of insolvency and I can fully appreciate the position of a man who finds himself without sufficient property to meets his debts as from time to time they fall due. It is a position no man need be ashamed of, and I know that at any rate with business creditors, no man who gets into that state has anything to fear if he gets into that position honestly. In fact it is the record of business transactions in Canada, and I believe the United States as well, that the honest debtor who becomes insolvent and makes a declaration to his creditors, is always treated most liberally. There may sometimes of course be an occasional extortioner, who may insist on having his pound of flesh, but I believe those individuals are scarce. But the man who in this community asks for terms and surrenders his property, is invariably treated with leniency and fairness. So far as getting into financial difficulties is concerned, that is not a matter to allege against anyone. But that is not the allegation here. It is that, having got into financial difficulties, the honorable gentleman, instead of taking the course which I have pointed out—the course which an honest man would have taken under the circumstances—the honorable gentleman ran away and went to a foreign country. Now, I have here a newspaper published in the city of Denver, in the state of Colorado—the Denver Times of July 11, 1894, purporting to give an account of the honorable gentleman's transactions with regard to the matter now alluded to.

Mr. Martin then read the following extract from the newspaper mentioned:

F. L. CARTER-COTTON.

The despatches of last Monday brought the news of the election of Francis L. Carter-Cotton to the parliament of British Columbia from Vancouver Island. The despatch said that he was formerly a resident of Denver.

Mr. Carter-Cotton's life, were it all known, would be a romance of much interest and the chapter devoted to his life in Colorado would not be the least interesting.

Sometime about 1875 or 1876 a very gentlemanly man arrived in Fort Collins, stopping there for a visit as a part of a general tour of the west. He gave his name as Francis L. Carter, and he was induced to make some investments in the northern city. He remained, for some time, and after disposing of his interests very profitably, left Fort Collins for England. Later he returned under the name of Francis L. Carter-Cotton the hyphenated name being explained by the statement that some money had been given him on condition of his assuming the name of Cotton.

A PROMINENT CITIZEN.

Mr. Carter-Cotton, who was a man of much ability and learning, at once took a leading place in the business and social world of Fort Collins. His geniality and gentlemanliness made him a general favorite and he was a well-known man of the city. Always quiet and unpretentious, he was looked up to as one of the leading capitalists of the town.

Of course such a man would be accompanied by stories, of which the truth or falsity are never known. One of the most important told of Mr. Carter-Cotton was that, although apparently a man of a violent temper, and that at one time in England, while engaged in a game of billiards, he became enraged at his opponent, attacked him with his cue and killed him. Whether this story were true or false, it was a fact that Carter-Cotton, though evidently a lover of billiards, was never known to play.

As has been stated, Mr. Carter-Cotton took an active part in the development of the farming district surrounding Fort Collins. He first undertook the building of the North Poudre canal, which he completed at an estimated cost of $75,000 He also organized the North Poudre Land and Cattle Co., of which he was manager. He had control of some 10,000 acres of land, and had contracts with the Union Pacific for lands belonging to the company in Wyoming. Everything with which the gentleman was connected seemed prosperous, and until 1886 there was no question in regard to his solvency.

On his canal and lands he had issued bonds to the amount of $150,000 of which the Traveler Insurance Company were alleged to hold $50,000, while the balance had been disposed of to New England parties.

FINANCIAL TROUBLES.

In 1885 he first showed symptoms of being hard up by failing to meet the interest on his bonds and paper, and for the next year he was a much worried and harassed man. Up till this time, Carter-Cotton had been guilty of no dishonesty, and his subsequent proceedings are charitably supposed to have been pursued with the expectation of "pulling himself out of the hole" and eventually making matters straight.

At this time he consulted a prominent attorney of Fort Collins regarding his affairs, and when informed that there was no hope for him, that he must go to the wall, he seemed to break down entirely.

About the middle of November, 1886, a number of Carter-Cotton's creditors, men who had done work of various kinds for him, called on him at his office, demanding payment for their services. While the conversation was going on, Carter-Cotton excused himself for a few moments, and going out, locked the doors in the building. When they discovered that they were prisoners, and had escaped through the transom, their debtor had left town, he having been seen jumping on the Denver train just as it was leaving the station. Then began the hue and cry, but before anything could be done, Mr. Carter-Cotton had left the state for parts unknown, his exit from Denver being in an emigrant car, although the possessor of a first class ticket.

His liabilities were figured at about $300,000, a large portion of this amount being covered, however, by the bonds issued. Among the creditors were the Travelers' Insurance Co., Colorado Loan and Trust Co., Hayden & Dickenson, and a number of private parties.

Further investigation showed that he had collected interest on mortgages for companies for which he was agent and failed to turn in the same. One case was reported where he had borrowed money on a trust deed, which is said to have been a forgery, and other cases of like character were alleged. His clerk, a Mr. Wayne, who had recently arrived from England lost $10,000 belonging to himself and sister, which he had placed in Carter-Cotton's hands on his arrival in Fort Collins.

This latter was placed in the hands of J. F. Farley of Thiel's Detective Agency, but unavailingly, for Mr. Carter-Cotton had disappeared. He was seen in Kansas City by a Fort Collins gentleman while making his escape, and that was the last seen of him by his Fort Collins acquaintances.

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

The matter died out and finally it was reported that Carter-Cotton was in British Columbia driving a mule team on some public works. The Fort Collins Courier was subscribed for and it was supposed that the late resident of Fort Collins was the subscriber, although it was addressed to a strange name.

The despatch of Monday shows that Carter-Cotton is again on top. It indicates that he entered the journalistic field, being the editor of the News-Advertiser of Vancouver city, and a member of parliament. For the past two months he has been in jail on a charge of contempt of court, and while in that position has been re-elected and will be the probable leader of the opposition in the new house.

His success in British Columbia is the result entirely of his ability. Although at first it was supposed that he left Colorado with considerable money in his possession, subsequent developments seemed to show that he was "broke" on his departure. Those acquainted with him speak highly of his literary talent, while his extensive travels both in this country and in the old world made him one of the best informed men. His Fort Collins acquaintances evince much interest in his career and will await further developments. Many believe him a man of honest purpose and intentions and had it not been for financial straits he would not have left Colorado or been involved in the troubles mentioned.

"Now then, Mr. Speaker," continued Mr. Martin, "so much for that. Then it is alleged that 'whereas it is important that there should be no suspicion of wrong-doing,' etc. Before dealing with that, let me say that it has been suggested that I deliberately joined the government of which the hon. gentleman is a member, with these charges hanging against him. In regard to the first charge. That did not come up until after I had joined the government. In regard to the second, I had heard that the hon. gentleman had been in gaol, but up to the time I entered the government I never investigated the circumstances in any way. I was told, and believed, that the hon. gentleman was sent to gaol as the result of a political persecution on the part of the persons he was opposing. In regard to this question, it will not be seriously disputed that it is an important one."

Mr. Martin quoted again from the resolution: "No suspicion of wrong-doing." There was one very especial reason why the hon. gentleman should be beyond suspicion in any shape or manner.

"Most improperly the hon. gentleman holds not one but two positions in the government of this province, and what the effect of that is, of course, we know. Ministers of the crown are not expected to give bonds, although handling large sums of money, as security for their honesty. The public interest is supposed to be protected by what I may call the moral guarantee of gentlemen. It is necessary to have the signatures of certain gentlement of the service, who are under heavy bonds, before many can be disbursed, or any large sums be given out. But through the peculiar arrangement I have referred to, all the money of the province which might at any time be on deposit is absolutely at the disposal of the single signature of the hon. Minister of Finance. This occurs through his holding those two positions. By far the most important is the department of lands and works. This is the great disbursing department. A large part of the public funds of the province is expended through this department, the department of finance issuing the cheques. It is perfectly true that no cheque would be cashed by the government's bankers, the Bank of British Columbia, except under the signature of Mr. Flett—who has to give security—as well as that of the Minister of Finance. But under what circumstances does Mr. Flett attach his signature to those cheques? It is his duty to sign every voucher presented to him. If the voucher comes from the lands and works department, signed by the minister of that department, Mr. Flett has no option whatever; it is his duty to issue a cheque for the amount, the voucher having gone through the hands of the auditor, and then the cheque is sufficient to draw the money, being counter-signed by the Minister of Finance. That is an additional reason, if an additional reason be needed as to why a gentleman holding positions of this kind should be absolutely above and beyond suspicion. For these reasons I lay these matters before the house. I wish, however, to amend the resolution by adding the words: "and report the result of this investigation to the house." The resolution is seconded by Mr. Robertson.

HON. MR. COTTON, who was received with government cheers, said: I certainly think, sir, that neither in this house nor in any other house has there been such a gross abuse of the privilege of a member of the house as we have witnessed here to-day by the hon. gentleman in bringing forward such a resolution as we have before us now. Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman knows that inside of this house he has certain privileges and concessions given to him for certain purposes; but, sir, these are not given to him, as I conceive, to use them in the dastardly manner in which he has done to-day towards me. He, sir, comes forward and has made statements here under the protection afforded him as a member of this house, which are wholly without foundation, which are devoid of truth, and which I am convinced the hon. gentleman himself knew were without foundation when he said them.

Now, sir, I will deal with the three questions into which the resolution is divided. The first is: "That the present Minister of Finance and Agriculture and Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works while acting as secretary for the Executive Council of this province, deliberately falsified the minutes of the said Executive Council." Mr. Speaker, I give that statement the most deliberate denial. It is utterly false, as the hon. gentleman himself knows, and you have here my hon. colleagues, the Premier, the Minister of Mines, and the President of the Council, who were all present at that time, and who will, I know, endorse me when I say that is a deliberate falsehood. Those gentlemen are here; they can speak for themselves. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Martin) with the cunning that is worthy of him, hopes, no doubt, that I will break my official oath as he has done ——

Mr. Joseph Martin (vigorously)—I rise to a point of order. If this charge is to be made I want it to be made in the same way as this one is, so that I may have an opportunity of meeting it. I ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Cotton—I say, sir, and hon. gentlemen on the other side who were members of the executive council ——

Mr. Martin—Will you give me your ruling, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker—What is the point of order?

Mr. Martin—That you can charge a person with perjury in this house. Can it be possible that one member of this house in the course of his speech can deliberately charge another with perjury! I want to appeal from your ruling, Mr. Speaker, to this house. Let us know if that can be done.

Hon. Mr. Cotton—I say, sir,

Mr. Martin—I want to appeal, Mr. Speaker, from your ruling."

Mr. Speaker—What is the charge of perjury?

Mr. Martin—He said that I had broken my oath of office. Breaking an oath is perjury; that is a crime for which a person can be sent to gaol.

Mr. Eberts—Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin, continuing: "Now if that is to be allowed, after your attention has been called to it, I wish to appeal from your ruling. I am not asking you to reconsider your judgment; I want to appeal to the house to let us know whether that can be done."

Mr. Speaker—I leave it to the house to decide. Shall the chair be sustained?

Hon. Mr. Henderson—We might as well understand that the ruling is and what the appeal is. As the hon. member of Vancouver puts it, he puts it in this way, that charging an hon. member here with perjury is charging him with a crime and should not be permitted in this house. Well, putting it in that way I suppose that a charge of that sort, if I understand the Finance Minister putting it in that bald way, I would say that a charge made in that manner is not perhaps parliamentary. The Minister of Finance was about to speak on that question when the hon. member insisted on an appeal being taken. We might just as well understand where we are. We do not wish to excite this discussion, which perhaps is likely to be acrimonious; I do not wish to throw any oil upon these flames; but if an appeal is to be made we should know just exactly what the point is.

Hon. Mr. Cotton—I will deal with it in another way. If the language was unparliamentary, I will withdraw it and I will put it in this way, that bound by my oath of office ——

Mr. Martin—I have asked an appeal, sir, from your decision; you have given your decision. Now I want to know whether your decision has been correct or not. It has occurred before in this house with regard to me and it has got to stop.

Mr. Speaker—The hon. gentleman will take his seat then.

Col. Baker—I would like to know what we are to vote upon. Is it that the hon. Minister of Finance, when he makes a charge of that kind should make it as a resolution to the house? That I take it is the point of order?

Mr. Martin—Exactly.

Mr. Speaker—I cannot put it in that way. The Finance Minister referred to a statement made by the hon. member for Vancouver as breaking his oath of office; the hon. member for Vancouver takes exception to that and says it is out of order.

Col. Baker—The hon. Finance Minister has withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker—I cannot allow any other question arising as to whether the statement was in order to be put.

Hon. Mr. Semlin was rising when Mr. Speaker continued: "The question is as to whether the statement made by the hon. the Finance Minister was out of order; that is not exactly a question that I can put to this house."

Mr. Booth—That is not exactly the question. The question is, can the hon. member make a charge that amounts to a charge of perjury in the course of a debate?

After further debate, Mr. Martin repeated that if the Finance Minister wished to make any charge against him off his feet he should make it in the same manner he had made this charge, giving a full right of reply. It was not permissible for him to introduce a charge of perjury, which was a crime punishable by imprisonment, in the course of a debate, as he had done. As Mr. Martin did not further press his motion for an appeal from the Speaker's ruling the debate proceeded.

Hon. Mr. Cotton continued: "Well, I will put it in another way. The hon. gentleman is well aware, sir, that I am not going to violate any oath of office I have taken, by divulging here what took place at a meeting of the executive, and consequently all I can do in regard to this charge is to deliberately deny that statement, and for confirmation of my statement I will appeal to my hon. colleagues who were present on that occasion. I think that the words of the Premier and his colleagues will be accepted in this house against anything the hon. third member for Vancouver will say. That disposes of that part of it.

Now, continued the Finance Minister, I will be charitable enough to assume that the statements made by the hon. gentleman in the charges two and three of this resolution are the result of want of knowledge on his part; because, sir, they are absolutely inaccurate—even in the bold statement they set out as to the facts, irrespective of any action I may have taken in them. He charges me with having committed in connection with the property of Mr. Gordon, a breach of trust, and he stated in this house that when this Mr. Gordon went to England he left property in my hands as trustee and left with me a power of attorney to deal with it. Now, sir, that statement is entirely false. Mr. Gordon and I were interested in certain matters in Vancouver. When he went to England in 1888 I was left in charge of those properties and on certain conditions he agreed to sell out his interests to me and at my suggestion he left a power of attorney; not with me but with Mr. Keith, the manager of the Bank of British Columbia, without whose consent and approval no disposal could be made of this property; so you see the whole charge of the hon. gentleman falls to the ground. As a matter of fact more capital was required to carry on this business. Mr. Gordon wrote out to Mr. Keith that he was unwilling, or unable, to furnish any more capital and expressed his desire that his interests should be disposed of. Mr. Keith, for certain reasons to which I need not refer now, proposed to me to do this, and although at that time, owing to an impression that prevailed in Vancouver, it was not an easy thing to do, I succeeded in interesting certain parties and got them to advance a large sum of money on certain conditions. One of these conditions was that I should not divulge the fact that they were interested in this enterprise. Well, after a lapse of time—I think it was in 1892—Mr. Gordon returned to Vancouver. Things were not very bright at that time, investments could not be realized very well, and he insisted on a statement. I gave him a note on which he sued and recovered judgment. Then a controversy arose as to collecting this. I was examined on certain matters. I gave a full account of all that had transpired, as Mr. Charles Wilson, who was my solicitor, and Mr. E. P. Davis, who was on the other side, can bear testimony. The only question I refused to answer was as to who bought this interest. Not as to what had been done with the money or anything of that kind, but as to who had acquired a certain interest. There was no dispute, sir, that a sum of money had been paid and that it had gone to the credit of myself and Mr. Gordon. There was no question about that; the charge of contempt of court was simply that I refused to divulge the names of certain parties who had acquired an interest, for which it was never disputed, a large sum of money had been paid. I thought, sir, that having entered into a solemn agreement I was bound not to break the pledge that I had given not to divulge the names. And although I bowed to the decision of the learned judge of the Supreme court that they were quite right in enforcing the law when application was made to do so, yet I must say that if I had to go through the same proceeding to-day I should feel bound conscientiously to do the same as I did then. I have no distress at all in having suffered a term of imprisonment for carrying out my agreement. I think I have answered all that part of the question. Oh! I may say that this matter was all settled in 1894 and disposed of six years ago, and now it is brought up as a charge against me, six years afterwards. I think there was never any charge made that I tried to swindle anybody, or committed any breach of trust. As the records of the Supreme court show, the whole question turned on how a certain sum of money was to be sought and paid for, and the whole question in regard to my committal to jail was only caused by my refusal to divulge the names of certain parties who had acquired certain interests on payment of a large sum of money, the payment of which was not disputed.

Mr. Eberts—By the sale of Mr. Gordon's property?

Hon. Mr. Cotton—It was by the sale of certain interests in the News-Advertiser.

Mr. Eberts—Belonging to Gordon?

Hon. Mr. Cotton—Belonging to Mr. Gordon and myself and on the authority of Mr. Keith, who pressed very hard for that arrangement to be carried out. Without his sanction nothing could have been done.

"Now, sir," went on Mr. Cotton, about this Colorado matter. The honorable gentleman has read a sensational and most amusing account. I would like to say here that if you look into that matter you will find that that account was published in 1894, and for your information I can tell you that the account was wired up here and sent out to be published for certain reasons. I was approached—and I may say here that the late Mr. Theodore Davie was well aware of all this—during the campaign of 1894, and only a few months before his death he told me all about it, and gave me circumstances and details of which I knew something, but which up to that time I had not been able to explain. There was a man named McManus who was around this city, and who I believe went afterwards to a northern part of the Island to establish a newspaper. He came to me and wanted me to furnish him with a certain amount of money to start a newspaper somewhere in the northern part of the Island.

Mr. Eberts—Wellington.

Hon. Mr. Cotton—He told me that if I did not do that he would make it very interesting for me. And it appears he went to Mr. Theodore Davie and told him that for certain considerations he could give him information which would utterly break me down in the campaign of 1894. But Mr. Davie was too honorable, too high and too straightforward. (Cheers.) Although we were strong political opponents, he was not going to be a political assassin, and he told this man that he would not have anything to do with him. I mention that to show that although these acts happened from five to twenty years ago, the account was published in 1894, which fits in with the general election. I am not ashamed of anything I did in Colorado or anything that took place there. I admit that I lost a large sum of money there, but I am not the only man who has lost a great deal of money and has only got experience for it. I was engaged in a number of large enterprises in Colorado, most of them in companies organized in the state of Colorado, in which English capital was largely interested. The details given in that paper are not accurate in many particulars, but they indicate in a general way some of the organizations, although there were others much larger. In fact one of the enterprises owned land to the extent of over 250,000 acres. I was largely interested in these, not only financially but also as manager of them, and at one time they promised to give a very large return on the investment. In consequence of the disfavor into which certain cattle companies which had been organized in the state of Wyoming fell, there was a slump in this kind of security; cattle also fell owing to certain circumstances. Then we became involved in litigation for some land which we had agreed to purchase from the Union Pacific Railway, while we also had serious litigation on our hands in connection with our water rights.

After a reference to irrigation, the Finance Minister went on to say that the result of the litigation was that the companies got into difficulties.

Now, what did I do? I did not do as I might have done, namely, realized large sums of money before the shareholders knew anything about this, and put that money in my pocket and go off. No, sir. I took every dollar that I owned in the world, my private means, and put it into these companies, with the hope that I might be able to carry them through until better times came, so that those who had invested large sums of money on my recommendation might come out all right. I found it impossible, and I saw at last that there was nothing to do but to allow these companies to be placed in the hands of the receivers for the bondholders, which I did, and I then started to find another field for occupation; but before I did that I handed everything I had got of my private means—saddle-horses, carriages, etc., everything I possessed—and left myself so absolutely without anything that I had to borrow $500 from the manager of one of the larger companies in order to pay my personal expenses. I think there is nothing to be ashamed of in that, and in many respects I am glad this matter has been brought up, because since 1894 this matter has been used to my political disadvantage by certain newspapers, which from time to time have inserted in their columns all sorts of misrepresentations about me. I know the difficulties with which newspapermen have to contend in this country; I know how bitter is political animosity at times, although I am proud to say that during the twelve years I have been an editor I have never allowed any personal attacks on any political opponent.

Mr. Eberts—That is not so.

Hon. Mr. Cotton—That is so. You will not find in the News-Advertiser any personal attack on any man in this province. Now that the matter has come up I shall feel that I am not bound to grant any indulgence to anybody who attacks me like that. I think I have answered in a manner which will be satisfactory to the members of this house. But I would like to say a few words in regard to some remarks made by the mover of the resolution as to the management of public affairs of this government. The hon. gentleman, I gathered, said that any cheque would be covered all right that I had signed myself, but afterwards he said that Mr. Flett would have to sign them. Besides Mr. Flett, every voucher has to be passed by the auditor of one department or the other, and has also to be examined and reported on by the deputy minister. In the finance department, Mr. Flett passes them; the minister does not sign cheques, he merely countersigns them, after the deputy minister and the auditor have approved. In the lands and works department the vouchers are signed by Mr. Gore in the lands and works department, while Mr. Gamble, the chief engineer, who has now charge, as I explained to the house the other day, certifies for all the works. I do not think that I need say anything more about that. I have now been twelve years actively engaged in public life in British Columbia. Many gentlemen of this house have had business transactions with me and I think that they will tell you that they have always found me straightforward and anxious to do everything I undertook. And I may say some than that, sir. There are more hon. gentlemen on the other side of the house who are well acquainted with parties who were interested in those Colorado transactions, and they know that they have heard from those parties that I never profited one dollar from anything that was done down there. I do not know that I need take any more of the time of the house with these matters, but I will leave it to this house to judge whether I have not fully answered these charges, and whether as between myself and the junior member for Vancouver that they do not say that they consider these charges entirely disproved. (Loud government cheers.)

Mr. MCBRIDE, SEMLIN observed that the house could not be congratulated upon the exhibition with which it had been favored by the third member for Vancouver. The attack of that hon. member had been so evidently actuated by personal interest or personal spite, that no one would be likely to misinterpret it as intended for the public good. It was wholly and purely a personal matter. The public good could be in no way conserved by the carrying out of the resolution. What purpose or advantage to the country could there be in investigating the personal affairs of any hon. member of the house some twenty years ago? How did it concern the house whether the hon. Minister of Finance made or lost money during his residence in Colorado? What had the legislature of British Columbia to do with that matter in any respect or particular? Everyone was well aware of the characteristics of western frontier life, and of the shrewdness of the business of the West. Everyone was aware how, when a young man came to the west of America from England, he was in most cases looked upon (if he had money) as a providential dispensation for the benefit, not of the public, but of the individuals among whom he came. There was little doubt that the hon. Minister of Finance when he first came to western America, was in this position; and it was probable that in consequence of his earlier experience in America, he had now less money but a great deal more experience. But in any event, of what interest to the house were this gentleman's experiences and earlier concerns, in Colorado? Why should the house have anything to do with them? The matters referred to by the third member for Vancouver in connection with the Finance Minister's Colorado residence were no secret. They had been common talk as long ago as 1894, and since then; and the introducer of this resolution must have heard of them long before he became a member of the house and accepted a seat in the cabinet, with the hon. minister as a colleague. The hon. gentleman must have known of these rumors prior to the elections of 1898 — Mr. Martin—I have already told the house that I did not know of them.

Hon. Mr. Semlin continued that he would of course have to accept the hon. gentleman's statement in this regard, while he felt convinced that there was other public man who would say that he had not heard of these things. The third member for Vancouver was apparently quite alone in his lack of knowledge. It seemed to him, that knowing all the circumstances so far as they were understood, the third member for Vancouver had been quite willing to take a seat in the executive of which the hon. Minister of Finance had been a prominent member; he was also willing that that hon. gentleman should be the leader of the party and of the government.

Mr. Martin promptly rose to deny this assertion. He had said that he wondered that the hon. Finance Minister had not been selected as leader—"as against you, Mr. Premier"—this concluding shot being directly addressed to Hon. Mr. Semlin.

The Premier smiled.

Hon. Mr. Semlin continued that he was at a loss to reconcile Mr. Martin's present statements with his own observations and natural inferences. Now as to who were the proper parties to judge between Hon. Mr. Cotton and the public. As the hon. minister had said, he had been in the province for upwards of twelve years, and had been elected and re-elected as the representative of Vancouver in this house. The election of the province when they had so honored the hon. gentleman by choosing him as their representative had been even more cognizant of all the circumstances of these matters referred to by the hon. third member for Vancouver than that hon. gentleman himself. Their confidence in the Finance Minister, and their opinion as to these charges, was illustrated in his repeated election in successive terms, and the house had now no right whatever to interfere in a matter wholly between the representatives and the electors who had sent him to the house. If the electors of Vancouver had come to the conclusion that Hon. Mr. Cotton was not a fit and proper person to represent them upon the floor of the house they had the power in their own hands to relegate him to private life. Their returning him to the house with full knowledge of the facts, was a sufficient refutation of the charges which the third member for Vancouver had now resurrected. When the third member for Vancouver launched

(Continued on Seventh Page.)

CARPETS, RUGS, ART SQUARES

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(From Friday's Daily Editi

Coast Mining And Sea

An Interesting Budget B by Passengers on t Queen City.

First Parties for Season ing Towards the Omin Country.

The steamer Queen City came the North yesterday morning. her passengers were Hon. Edga ney, who is returning from hi properties at Sydney Inlet, and man, James Corkle, who is en the Kootenay country. Consta Spain came down with an Ind oner who has been sentenced months' imprisonment. Mr. provincial constable, and was a medal a short time ago for in the rescue of the Hera's crew Engvik, T. R. Cliff, W. L. C miners of Clayoquot; D. Mc who has properties at Clayoqu Alberni Canal; Rev. Father of Hesquoit, who is bound E Todd, J. Somers, H. C. New Sydney T. Toy also came down. Toy and Newton are interested property at San Juan. Mr. New a number of men there last trip these properties. The Queen ports that the schooner Sadie was getting a crew at Nootka. reported that the schooner W Rich was ashore at Village Isla the report could not be verifie Ainoka and the Ida Etta sail Hesquoit a week ago. The Que leaves again on Tuesday for the

SOUTHERN SEALERS

Interesting Letter From One Crew of the Ocean Bell

Mr. J. Collister has received from his brother, who is on the schooner Ocean Belle. The le dated at Drake's Bay, February tells of the accident to one of the Belle's crew and the smashing of her boats. The letter says: " a bit of a blow, and a big sea wa the schooner, smashing complet of the boats. I was just going when I saw the sea coming, and to a man who was standing boats to look out, and jumped bel was a green man and did no where to get to. Before he could the wave swept on to the schoon the broken-up boats jammed him the skylight. His leg was not but it was badly bruised. If th had not pinned him down he wou been washed overboard. Three serted at Drake's Bay, where w to endeavor to get new boats. W not get boats there, and the capta to San Francisco to get new o more men to replace the deserte also states that the Ocean Belle skins, almost all of which were before February 1. The weat month has been so bad that only had been taken. The Ocean B ports that the Vera had 308 sk City of San Diego 210, the En 70 and the Viva 10.

FOR OMINECA.

First Party for That District North Last Night.

The steamer Willapa sailed la for the North. She had on bo parties for Manson Creek, in th eca district, G. W. Otterson, J. G. A. Thompson taking up a nu men and a large quantity of sup that district. Rev. Mr. Apple deacon Collison, R. Chambers, G and O. Helmer also took passag Willapa.

WILL CALL HERE.

Another Daring Navigator to Sai from Here to Paris.

Capt. A. Frietsch, who purpos from Seattle to Havre and the position in a sloop of his own tion, will start Sunday aftern will name the sloop just before He will put in at Victoria, Po send and Portland to exhibit Capt. Frietsch has made sev trips in small boats.

COWICHAN VOLUNTE

Committee Take Steps to Ar the Formation of a Cor

The committee appointed b sens present at the patriotic m Duncans on February 6 to tak form a Cowichan volunteer cor Wednesday at the court house, The committee consists of F. land Dougall (chairman), Leakey, Major Mutter, Capt. H. H. Addington and John E. As a preliminary step, it wa by Major Mutter and seconde Addington that the following drawn up, to be placed in places in the district: The co pointed to take in consideratio ing of a rifle volunteer corps chan met on Wednesday at there being present Messrs. F Dougall, John E. Hall, Rev. Capt. the Hon. H. H. Addi Major Mutter. The committe have sheets placed where th to join such a corps could names. It is proposed to hav ed section, if a whole company ed men cannot be raised. The on the committee have also p ceive names of any wishing t names to be sent in on or 3rd day of March.

The meeting then adjourn p.m. Saturday, March 3.

GENERAL PRI