PREMIER TURNER'S TOUR.

The First Minister Discusses the Record and Policy of the Government,

To the Thorough Satisfaction of the Electors of Cowichan and Comox.

A Series of Splendid Meetings Indicating Success for the Government.

If the indications of crowded and enthusiastic public meetings, well satisfied constituencies, and hearty promises of support count for anything, Premier Turner and his government are sure of endorsation in Cowichan and Comox districts. These Hon. Mr. Turner has just visited, and the residents hailed the opportunity to hear from his own lips the account of his stwardship, and at the same time to assure him of the continuance of their confidence in himself and his policy. The meeting at Cumberland on Thursday night is spoken of by entirely disinterested parties as one of the most satisfactory political gatherings the district has ever known, while equal cordiality and good feeling characterized the Duncan and Cobble Hill assemblies. No public meeting was held at Nanaimo, but the friends and followers of the Premier in the Coal City did not permit him to pass through their town without grasping his hand and assuring him that Nanaimo, as always, is "right." Throughout both districts visited no genuine complaint agains the government has been voiced, the only grievance brought to the notice of the Premier being purely local—trifling matters of detail susceptible of immediate and satisfactory adjustment. That the leader of the government should have taken the time and trouble to come among them at the very outset of what promises to be a trying campaign, is taken as a special compliment by the settlers of Comox and Cowichan, and Mr. Nightingale seemed to express the feeling of all when in closing the Cobble Hill meeting—the last of the series—he said:

"I have come to the conclusion that it would be a great mistake for this province to let so good a man as Mr. Turner go. Tried and proven men of brains and capacity in the charge of the country's affairs are essential to its continued prosperity. In Hon. Mr. Turner British Columbia has such an one—the soul of integrity progressive experienced and everywhere esteemed as a man and a citizen. Nothing has ever been substantiated against him during his long career in politics, and the farmers should join with the miners in returning him to power with a majority adequately emphasizing their appreciation."

THE PREMIER AT DUNCAN.

A Forceful Exposition of the Government Policy—Major Mutter Talks Good Common Sense.

Although unhappily a little late in starting, the meeting at Duncan Saturday was exceptionally well attended, and what is more, thoroughly representative. There were none who came to amuse themselves or to be amused, and the intelligent farmers of the district who constituted the majority of the audience, weighed carefully every statement of the Premier's before placing upon his course the stamp of their hearty approval. Mr. Alexander Blythe was chairman, Mr. G. H. Hadwen secretary, and these with Major J. M. Mutter, the district member, and Mr. Herd, the opposition candidate, occupied seats on the platform—the latter by invitation of the Premier.

In prefacing his remarks, Hon. Mr. Turner referred to the disposition of a portion of the country to hold him responsible for all the misdeeds or errors of judgment in the government of the country during its history as a province. This he did not consider fair or just, for in reality his responsibility for the management of British Columbia's affairs commenced only when he became Prime Minister, and during the time he had filled that important office he regarded as abundant the proof, in practical accomplishments, of the wisdom of the government policy. The country had grown and developed with amazing rapidity, which it could not have done had its destinies been controlled by a parsimonious administration, failing in recognition of or confidence in the greatness of the province in its resources. The chief complaint raised against the government appeared to be that it had retained the reins of power by extravagant expenditure—that it had added alarmingly and unnecessarily to the civil service list throughout the province; that it had borrowed recklessly for works of a magnitude not justified at the present stage of provincial development; and that the members of the cabinet had been persistently advancing their own interests and not those of the public, and should be turned out of power for wasting the heritage of the people. These charges he would deny, both generally and specifically. The government had been a prudent and economical one, carefully husbanding the provincial revenue, improving the provincial credit, tiding the country over the evil times, and placing British Columbia in a position to take advantage of each opportunity to develop the resources of the province. This was the liberal and intelligent policy of the Government.

To take the chief item of complaint—the expenditure had unquestionably been large, but the conditions of the country and the necessities of the times demanded a large expenditure to ensure development, and without this large expenditure it would have been impossible for British Columbia to have won her present proud position. Assuredly British Columbia was magnificently endowed in the variety, value and extent of her natural resources, but without a liberal investment in the trails and roads and railways and public works these resources could never be brought to market, or the necessary augmentation of the population be accomplished. (Hear; hear).

With regard to the growth of the revenue during the past four years, it would be remembered that until 1893-4 the province existed under a different form of land law to that which then came into force. Large tracts of the public domain could previously be purchased at low rates, and numbers of these blocks being held, complaint became general as to the so-called evil of land speculation, and the law was so changed as to restrict the sale of land to small holdings. Of course there was an immediate and appreciable decrease in the revenue from land sales, which had theretofore been as high as $200,000 per annum, and in addition to this decrease the province had at the same time to face a depression that was not merely local, but extended through all America—and indeed was world wide. In that year the revenue was $798,570, and wholesale ruin was confidently predicted for the province by the opposition. They foresaw a continued decline of the revenue, stagnation of trade, suffering for the poor, and practical collapse for British Columbia.

Yet blue ruin did not come. Instead of declining, the revenue advanced, and the province emerged from the test of the hard times with a revenue of $1,365,142, an increase of 83 per cent.—and this, be it remembered, in the face of serious business depression. Take the present year up to the 30th June and it would be found that progress had been even more marked—that the revenue had more than doubled since 1894. But, the opponents of the government would say, the government is not alone responsible for this remarkable expansion. Nor did he make such a claim. He did, however, maintain that the government by well considered legislation and a broad-minded grasp of affairs had arrested the decline of the revenue, and had been largely and directly responsible for its upward growth. (Hear, hear.)

How had it been done? By looking ahead and fostering the growth of productive industries. At the time this progressive policy was initiated, the mining districts, more particularly in Kootenay, were showing signs of great promise. The mineral wealth was undoubtedly there, but it was evident that it could not be properly utilized and made a contributor to the provincial revenue without liberal and judicious investment in roads, trails and railways to make the country accessible. This expenditure the government decided to make, and results had abundantly justified the wisdom of the policy.

Taking the Kootenay country, and the Slocan district more particularly, the Premier plainly showed how many difficulties confronted the government in their assumption of the task of furnishing railway facilities, their efforts in this direction being taken as the opposition keynote at the last election, and the cry being raised throughout the length and breadth of the province that the government had simply paid the money of the people into the hands of boodling railway contractors. It was declared that the price paid for the road was exhorbitant, and that in the end its construction would be found unjustified by results. The reverse was the case, for prospectors flocked into the country: the mines were opened out and made productive; camps and towns and cities sprang into existence; and the revenue of the country quickly began to feel the effect looked for. The object lesson was the same in the vicinity of Rossland, so that Kootenay, which before gave less than $30,000 to the province, last year contributed more than $300.000 to the revenue, and was still advancing.

True, the government did not create the mines of the Kootenay, but it undertook, in the face of tremendous opposition and in discouraging times, to provide the railways that have made hese mines productive, and thus have raised the revenue from that quarter of the province from $30,000 per annum to better than $300,000.

The history of the other railways recently constructed with the assistance of the government demonstrated the wisdom of the government's railway policy in similar manner. Take the Shuswap and Okanagan, which had been the means of settling up the valleys traversed, with an industrious and thrifty population. Low rates had been obtained for the settlers on this road, which tended to keep down the revenue desired by the province from this road. As it is it will very soon, he hoped, through the additional traffic received by the construction of the Penticton road be able to care for itself without any call upon the province.

The success of the Shuswap and Okanagan road being proved, the government had next given consideration to the importance of a railway to connect this road and district with the Kootenay mining country, the needs and conditions of the two being essentially dissimilar. This road also was now assured, running from Penticton to the Boundary, giving the farmers of the valleys a profitable market for their produce among the miners of Kootenay. Independent of the providing of this excellent home market, the road would be justified as the Shuswap and Okanagan had been in the settlement induced, the development of the Shuswap and Okanagan valleys being really phenomenal. The settlers were of the very best class; the output of their farms was the first quality; and so far advanced were their agricultural operations that in several parts of the district, mills were being operated to the limit of their capacity, notably the fine co-operative mill, which had already returned handsome dividends, and running night and day cannot yet keep pace with the orders it receives.

These were a few illustrations of the expendituhe so loudly complained of, investments in reality that had amply redeemed expectations and were already returning dividends to the country far beyond comparison with the cost involved. Nor had the far-sighted policy of fostering industrial development been confined to any part or section of the province. There was no quarter neglected, although the immensity of the province in proportion to the population greatly magnified the task devolving upon the government. There was no sacrificing of the Mainland districts for the benefit of the Island, or of the Island districts for the advantage of the Mainland. Fortunately the Island-Mainland bickering was dying out; this sectional feeling was always to be deprecated, and could not but be antagonistic to the general good of the province.

All sections of British Columbia were required to assist in the provincial upbuilding, and the wisdom and justice of this would be readily granted. It would be unfair, indeed, to spend the $300,000 contributed to the revenue from Kootenay, in that district, simply because Kootenay had brought that much money into the treasury. How had Kootenay been enabled to do this? By the co-operation of the other parts of the province to make it accessible and promote its development. Now Kootenay may be expected to bear its share in turn for the development of other sections, so that they in turn may also become equally productive.

In roads, trails, bridges and railways, and surveys, $4,240,000 had been spent by the province since 1891 under the head of public works. This was certainly a large sum, and the opposition cry was that its expenditude involved the running of the province into debt, and a large excess of expenditure over revenue. This was in a measure true; but in effect decidedly wrong. It would be impossible to do what had been done for British Columbia without creating a debt, but this in no way reflected upon the wisdom of the policy pursued by the government.

It was just the same as a man in business, who if he was progressive, was prepared to spend money for the extension of his interests. Supposing he saw how his trade would be materially benefitted by an investment of two thousand dollars—how his business would thereby be developed and larger profits be made possible. He would borrow the money for the purposes of his business, and, having obtained the necessary capital, would not lock up the money in his safe, but utilize it promptly for the expected return. Of course in the first year the expenditure he would have to make would show disadvantageously on the books; there would be an apparent over-expenditure, but in reality an investment, and no one would think of declaring that the man had been unwise to so develop his business.

The application of the illustration to the affairs of the province would present the matter fairly. Of course the investment showed as an over expenditure, but this did not mean that a bad investment had been made, or the only proper course had not been taken to promote provincial expansion and prosperity. (Applause).

It is entirely wrong to suppose that loans were being utilized to meet the running expenses of government. The country was self-sustaining, and the public accounts would show any person reading them carefully that ordinary revenue not only was sufficient to meet the ordinary running expenses of government, but left a substantial surplus to turn into permanent public works. The loans had been for the purposes of roads, railways, etc., for the opening up of the country and the development of its resources. There were, however, other public works of equal importance and necessity, such as hospitals, homes for the feeble and the helpless of the country, and other similar charitable institutions with assistance in the maintenance of doctors in new settlements. The time had gone by when prospective settlers took no thought of such matters. It was now almost as essential in their eyes that there should be schools for their children, and medical aid at hand in the event of it being required, as that there should be a road giving access to their homes. The government quite understood the value of the amenities of civilization, and was doing all in its power to provide them.

Another public work not usually classed as such was agriculture, in which $60,000 had been spent. At the time that he became a member of the government and found himself styled Minister of Agriculture as well as Minister of Finance, he had asked his colleagues what the duties of the Minister of Agriculture were supposed to include. No one could inform him, but the office until then had been little better than a name. He determined that if the office was to be retained it would be because it was necessary and proven in the interest of the country. Looking carefully into the matter he decided to thoroughly organize the department, and initiate active work in behalf of the farming industry. The first step was to call for returns from the farmers who were a little afraid to supply the desired information, imagining that it was to be used as a basis of taxation. They soon got over this idea, however, and responded to the call, so that before long the department was able to issue its first report—a good report, and the starter that meant much in calling attention to the agricultural possibilities of the province.

By persistent and systematic work, agriculture had been intelligently fostered since that time, legislation secured for the benefit of the farmer, institutes formed throughout the province, dairies and creameries established, and practical instruction given by lectures and other means, in the several branches of agricultural industry, by the most qualified and reliable experts. This year the work was to be carried on with increased energy, a number of the instructors from the Central Experimental Farm coming out in July to deliver lectures through the country and illustrate the latest and best methods in the various branches of farming to which they have given attention.

In fruit growing the work of the department had been most beneficial. Fortunately the department had secured the services of a man than whom none was more capable of handling this important branch—Mr. R. M. Palmer. His endeavors to promote the upbuilding of the fruit growing industry had been unwearied, and so valuable had he become to the farmers that every part of the province was asking for him, and lamenting that he could not subdivide himself so as to permit of his being in half a dozen places at one and the same time. (Laughter).

His advice as to the selection of varieties, the treatment of pests, the packing and handling of fruit, and kindred subjects was invaluable, and it was largely through his efforts in the department that the fruit exchange had been organized and was working satisfactorily, each season extending the range of its profitable operations.

Not only had the fruit output been materially increased in British Columbia, but the quality had been vastly improved, better packing done, and British Columbia fruit could now command a market demand limited only by the supply. In Manitoba it was the strong favorite—the British Columbia article—and in the mining districts a home market was had that was even more worthy of consideration, a market made available by the same fostering policy that had brought about the development of the mines. The Fraser valley and the Similkameen country furnished plenty of evidence as to the demand for British Columbia products from the miners of the Kootenay, while in the north a new community of miners was also looking to this province for all the fruits that can be sent to them. Here special packing would no doubt be required, in consideration of the rigor of the climate, but the profit of the trade would assuredly be large. How fruit was to be got into the northern country brought the premier to the consideration of present plans for the development of the country.

Large grants of land had been made previous to the present year, and cash bonuses of $4,000 per mile had in several cases been provided for with the similar object of securing railway construction to open up various important sections of the province, none more conspicuously in the public eye at present than the Northland, over a thousand miles of railway had in all been provided for, while 530 miles had already been constructed or was in course of constructions, including the Crow's Nest road which would be completed to Kootenay Lake by September and ultimately find an outlet on the Coast through the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern road. Surely this was a great showing for a population of 100.000, which was all British Columbia had a few years ago, although it had been going up with bounds since then. To refer to the proposed lines of communication, the one most talked of was that known as the Yukon road, to extend from a point on the provincial seaboard to Teslin Lake, and give provincial trade entry to the Yukon mining country. This road, he maintained, would be of the greatest importance to the Dominion and to the Province—essential to the maintenance of the provincial trade with the North country. There was a slight hitch at present owing to the attitude of the Dominion government, but Hon. Mr. Sifton had positively declared himself convinced of the necessity of the Dominion aiding the road, and he (Mr. Turner) was as firmly convinced as ever that the federal assistance should be given. It was a natural Dominion undertaking in the first place because it would contribute to the Dominion revenue three dollars for every one coming into the provincial treasury; because it became a contributor to the Dominion just as soon as construction commenced; because its primary object was to connect with a mining region not in British Columbia but in part of the North West Territory of Canada. The history of the negotiations leading up to the presentation of the Railway Aid bill (or Public Works Loan act) to the legislature was briefly reviewed, and the Premier made clear to all how essential to the welfare of the province it had been to act and act quickly as the government had in the Yukon railway legislation of the just closed session.

He hoped on his return to Victoria, he said, to find that the contract had been signed for the construction of the road, for there was no reason to believe that he would not. Mr. Mahn was daily expected from Montreal, and the latest information of which he was possessed indicated that there would be no difficulty in proceeding immediately with the construction of the line from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake. In the meanwhile the government was pushing on the road or trail to the lake, and thus doing all in its power to facilitate the entry of the gold seekers into the North country.

As knowledge of the country increased, evidence was increasing that in the vicinity of Teslin Lake, and within the borders of British Columbia there is a large auriferous area that will quite repay the attention of the miner and prospector. This section is almost sure to be filled with the reflex from the Klondike, for some are certain to be disappointed there, while others will no doubt prefer to remain and mine in the more temperate and accessible provincial gold fields of Cassiar and Omineca. The importance of the opening of the Northern country to the Coast and to Vancouver Island would be apparent to anyone giving consideration to the subject.

Nor was the Yukon railway the only road proposed with the object of opening up the northern mining country. It was also contemplated at some early date to have a line from the same Coast terminus of this road into the Omineca country, possibly from Kitimaat. From this point easy access was to be had with the north end of Vancouver Island, and the next government should be prepared and make it a part of its policy to take steps looking to the extension of the present Esquimalt and Nanaimo road through to the end of the Island. A few years ago this was impossible; to-day there was no reason to believe that it could not be done. The result of the Yukon gold discoveries had been to direct attention of the world to that part of the country, and while only a short time ago the far North was so very little known that capital would not lend eye or ear to any project looking to its development, everything in connection with the territory was now sure of an attentive consideration. The Cassiar Central had focused attention upon the country south of the Yukon; still another company was at the present time pointing the financial world to the Omineca.

The farmers of British Columbia were in reality quite as interested in the opening up of this northern country as the miners themselves, for it meant new and profitable markets, the acquisition of a heavy contributor to the revenue, and the increased prosperity of the province as a whole. Whatever the outcome of the elections, he was prepared to stand upon his policy—to endeavor to carry on the works seeming necessary for the welfare of the agriculturist as well as for the furtherance of the development of the province by large and well studied expenditures in railways, roads and other public works calculated to make productive the resources of all parts of the province.

It was asked how this was to be done and the statement was frequently made that the debt of the province was already so enormous that adding to it was not to be considered lest the province be ultimately swamped. True, the debt was large, but against it stood assets more than balancing the account, so that in reality the debt was not entitled to the name. The same policy that had produced the present expansion of provincial industries, looked upon as eminently sound by the financial authorities of the world as evidenced by the continued improvement of the provincial credit, would continue to prove beneficial in operation, while there was a possibility that better terms might be secured with the Dominion, and a larger contribution to the maintenance of the province be obtained from the federal treasury. Even although the amount payable to the Province by the Dominion had been fixed by the terms of union, and British Columbia with its small representation could not hope to single-handed secure a readjustment, might not British Columbia in union with some of the other provinces secure opportunity to present her just claims to a larger measure of support from the Dominion? One illustration of what might be done was found in the matter of the care of lunatics, which properly devolved upon the Dominion. This had become a very heavy charge upon provincial finances, and to be relieved of it would enable the province to utilize the money very advantageously in promoting provincial industrial development.

The present debt of British Columbia was $5,549,060 or $39 per head of population, while New Zealand, so persistently pointed to as the model colony of the Empire, showed a debt of $2.00 per capita—and the residents of the southern colony were not at all alarmed as to New Zealand going bankrupt. Of course in New Zealand the state owned the railways and telegraphs, but taking them out of the consideration the per capita debt remained about $135. The experience of New Zealand had failed to convince him—as so many had urged—that we in British Columbia should hereafter own and operate our own railways. British Columbia was not, like New Zealand, a self-contained country, and any state roads here would be compelled to live in active antagonism with the great transcontinental systems. Besides, the desirability of introducing state-owned railways was a question for the Dominion, not the Province, to consider. Where was the province to secure the money for so collosal a project, with direct taxation only to depend upon for revenue? The Dominion, on the other hand, if it saw the advantage of building a railway for the people, had only to put on a few additional cents of duty on whiskey and the problem was solved—for the people would drink whiskey. (Laughter). It would not do for British Columbia to overtax its resources, splendid as they were, and instead of aspiring to state-owned railways it was more practical for the government here to get such control of rates as would assure fair transportation charges and good service to the public, which the people of New Zealand had not. Last year New Zealand had actually got 3½ per cent. on its railways, but the loans to build the roads had cost more than this, and the rates charged for freight and passage were far beyond those of this country. The conditions and characteristics of British Columbia made state ownership of railways here an impossible or at all events a most impracticable proposition. And if the government was to build and operate the railways, wherever would the civil service list go to, with everyone before an election wanting some place on the road? (Laughter).

Tracing the history of his own endeavors as a public man in behalf of the upbuilding of British Columbia, Hon. Mr. Turner remarked that it might have been far better for him personally had he not gone into the government, but now that he was in politics he hoped to stay at the head of affairs long enough to see the prosperity of the province established on a sure footing for all time. As to his policy to-day—he believed that the conditions of the times justified further expenditure along the lines indicated, for the development of the varied sections and vast resources of the country. That government had not been, as some charged, "going too fast," and jeopardizing the provincial credit, was shown by the standing of that credit at the present time, the business leaders of the world being so thoroughly satisfied with the conduct of British Columbia affairs during recent years that the provincial credit had steadily advanced and the province was now listed in the open market as second to but two of the great divisions of the Empire. Canada as a dominion being one of these. The present price of money to the province indicated that the next loan would be obtained for 3 per cent., and surely this did not indicate that the provincial credit was being strained or that the keenest business men in the world inclined to the opinion that the government had gone too fast in the opening up of the resources of British Columbia.

Mr. D. W. Higgins, the late but not lamented speaker of the House—

"He's dead enough politically," observed some one from the rear of the hall.

Mr. Higgins had made the statement that the government's action in the assistance of the Cassiar Central was what had turned him against the administration, and had told the people that the result of the Cassiar Central bill had been to lock up some nine million acres of public land. How he could make such a statement passed comprehension, for the bill certainly produced no such result. There was no land locked up, and in fact no reservation of any land. Nor would a reserve be made. Nothing had been done except to limit the staking by the company to 700,000 acres in blocks of sixteen square miles, and until this land was so staked anyone could go in on it. After it was staked settlers upon it would have to deal with the company, who were ready to make them the most advantageous terms. There was nothing in the way of a reserve upon the land, and as a matter of fact 700,000 acres in so immense a country was a very small consideration, particularly as the land being as yet inaccessible is comparatively without value, and can only be made worth anything by the building of the road that it has been aimed to secure. Mr. Higgins had described the railway plan of the government and its general policy as giving away the heritage of the people. Was it not strange that Mr. Higgins had made no protest when the votes were passing through his hands in the legislature if he was sincere in his statement? He had never once raised any opposition to any of the votes, and even this year when he left the chair and came down on the floor of the House he had insisted on sitting on the government side, and there had voted for the very things he now so emphatically condemned. As to the Cassiar Central, it would be very interesting to probe the origin of his hostility—very interesting indeed.

Passing next to the personal property, or so-called "mortgage" tax, and the mining regulations of the island railway reserve, the Premier traced the history of the former from the time of its inception down to the present time, giving a concise and practical exposition of the subject and the difficulties in the way of altering the present arrangement. The remedy for the difficulty appeared to be simply a reduction of taxation. The first to argue for the removal of the tax, it would be remembered, were the loan companies of Vancouver, and it was highly probable that should the impost be removed, interest rates would be immediately advanced by the loan companies, while the government would have to face the question of how to make up for the source of revenue thus made an end of. The fact should not be lost sight of that the rate of taxes in British Columbia was light despite the large expenditures for the promotion of provincial development, ¾ of 1 per cent. being the showing here as in contrast with 2¼ or 2½ per cent. in the far famed province of Ontario. He was quite prepared to admit the practical duality of the charge involved in the personal property tax, and the importance of doing all possible to relieve the injustice felt by borrowers. In the hope of arriving at some practical solution of the problem a committee had this year been appointed to obtain specific working information and devise some scheme calculated to relieve from the so-called dual taxation. If the desired result can be attained, there would be none more glad to see it than the government, and none more ready than himself to do all in his power to reach the desired end.

"Cheap Money," and the bill to enable the farmers to seure money at easy terms for the development of their properties, he did not propose entering into at any length, for the reason that he had already arranged for men who had made a special study of the subject and possessed every detail of information regarding it, to go through the districts, making plain every point in the legislation and the financial plan involved. Similar stock credit associations had been found to work well in every other country in which they had been given a fair trial, and there seemed no rational reason why results other than successful should be anticipated in this province. Co-operation was the foundation and primary principle of the scheme, and no doubt the credit associations could be made workable and accomplish their mission here with care on the part of all.

As to the mining regulations in the Esquimalt and Nanaimo reserve, he had been endeavoring to arrange for the making public of the terms, but had not as yet been in a position to do so. His advice to any who found the fixed terms unsatisfactory or unfair was to go to headquarters and present the objections. He had in mind the case of eight men who had staked the same number of claims, and went to the railway office to buy the land. They found fault with the terms, and were asked, "Well, what do you want to do." They replied that they were prepared to pay $100—$50 down, the balance of the hundred in one year, for eight claims, and the remainder in payments in five years. Without further debate, the proposition was accepted and the men left well satisfied. He was inclined to think that the railway's terms as published were not so liberal as the company was prepared to make if special circumstances indicated the justice of reduction, and applicants simply presented their complaints to headquarters. The government would of course at all times do their best to promote the interests of the people in the making of the best possible arrangements.

In concluding his address the Premier said that if returned to power, the policy of his government would be to carry on public works for the opening up not only of Vancouver Island, but of all parts of the province, one of the contemplated projects being the Teslin Lake railway, and another the extension of the present Island road to the north end of Vancouver Island, providing a favorite passenger and light freight route to the North. The day of the Yukon was not over by any means, and the fact that Chief Engineer Coste had just been sent here to make considerable expenditures for the improvement of the Teslin, the Hootalinqua and other northern waterways, demonstrated that the Dominion authorities were not overlooking the North country. He had asked Mr. Coste if there existed any truth for the report gaining circulation that the Dominion had information indicating that the Yukon country would not justify anticipations. On the contrary, was his reply, the reports from all sections of the Yukon are so good that the government is almost afraid to let them become public. Careful reports have been received from each of the gold producing creeks, and totalling the output of these the result is so enormous that discounting it by 50 per cent. there will be still some $15,000,000 coming down this season.

"The policy upon which I ask the support of the people of British Columbia for myself and my government," concluded the Premier, "can be described in few words—progress in and for British Columbia. Progress secured through the opening up of our mines, the assistance and building up of our agricultural industry and our fisheries, so that general prosperity and contentment may naturally result."

During the progress of the address the closest attention of the audience had been given to the speaker, expressions of approval being frequent. As he resumed his chair the feeling of the meeting was expressed in long-continued applause. The invitation to anyone to ask questions was not accepted, and the conclusion was therefore to be drawn that Cowichan is satisfied with the record of the government, and will do its part toward returning the present administration to power on next month.

Major Mutter, M.P.P., who next was called upon, took the platform considerably handicapped by the shortness of the time available, and was therefore brief in what he had to say. His address, was however, pointed and eminently practical. He had been charged, he said, with entering the house as an independent supporter and subsequently degenerating into a slavish follower of the government. This charge he emphatically denied. He had been elected as a supporter of the government and he had supported the government, but with no sacrifie of independence at any time. He had supported the government because it was a government deserving of respect and if he had not at any time voted for measures originating with the opposition it was not because he had any objection to voting for a good opposition bill, but because the opposition had never brought in a bill that with the interests of the country and his constituents at heart he could conscientiously support. As to Hon. Mr. Turner, who had so clearly and interestingly presented the issues of the day for the benefit of the electors of Cowichan, he was not only an able man in public affairs, but a gentleman commanding the admiration and personal regard of every member of the house, opposition as well as government.

Coming to practical politics, the major inquired wherein Cowichan had any complaint as to treatment at the hands of the Turner government. Every reasonable request made through him in behalf of the district had been granted, and the government at all times seemed ready and anxious to promote in every way the prosperity of the district he had had the honor of representing during the late parliament. With reference to the mortgage tax, which some of his constituents were much concerned about, Mr. Cotton's condemnatory resolution dealing with this measure was in effect nothing less than a want of confidence resolution, starting with the declaration that the mortgage tax involved duality of taxation—this term being incorrect, and the collection of an illegal impost being indirectly charged against the government. Such being the case, he certainly could not join in voting for what was no les than a want of confidence resolution and he had therefore brought in an amendment pronouncing the personal property tax not dual taxation, although it was a tax unquestionably bearing unjustly at times on the unfortunate borrower. There was a difficulty unquestionably—a grievance in the operation of the tax—but how to make an end of it was no easy thing to determine. The late chief justice at the time he was premier and attorney general had lent his active brain to the solution of the question, and had brought in a bill aimed at removing the objection. It was found that this would not effect the desired purpose, and Hon. Mr. Davie had given the problem up. Personally he could not see a remedy save in the sweeping away of the tax, which he would like to see, but which involved many and serious financial difficulties. The proposal to exempt from taxation the mortgaged portion of property would not meet the case, for if this solution of the problem were accepted what were the municipalities to do for revenue? Supposing a man owned a farm worth $10,000 and against this farm there was a mortgage of $5,000. This proposal to exempt meant that but the $5,000 valuation would be assessable or taxable, and the revenue of the municipality would be divided by two. Would the municipalities approve of this? Again there was this objection to the removal of the tax. No one would dispute that a rich man should be taxed upon his wealth

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