

passed by the auditor of one department or the other, and has to be examined and reported on by the deputy minister. In the finance department Mr. Platt passed 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, the lands department, although Mr. Gamble, the chief engineer, has now charge, as I explained to the House the other day, of all the works.

"I do not think that I need say anything more about that. I have now been 12 years actively engaged in public life in British Columbia. Many hon. gentlemen of this House have had business transactions with me, and I think that they will tell you that I have always found me straightforward, and anxious to do everything I undertook. And I may say more than that, sir. There are some hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House who are well acquainted with parties who were interested in those business transactions, and now that they have heard from those parties that they never profited one dollar from anything that was done down there. I do not know that I need to take any more of the time of the House with these matters, but I will give that 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.)

Hon. Mr. 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 that had been made upon him 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 of 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 aware of the fact that the activities 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 as a stranger, and that 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 a stranger, and that it was probable that in consequence of his earlier experiences in America he had no less money but a great deal more experience. But in any event, of what interest to the House were these gentleman's experiences in his past life 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 knowledge 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 do not know of them.

Hon. Mr. Semlin continued that he would not object to accept of the hon. gentleman's statement in this regard, while he felt convinced that there was no 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 of these things, and the closure would not be attempted.

Mr. McPhillis accordingly resigned his amendment to the waste basket, and

Hon. Dr. McKechnie said that he had written to Mr. Martin, but he regarded it as his duty to state in himself right in the matter of the alleged falsification of the records of the executive. He was not at liberty of course to give any minute account of the proceedings of the executive, but he wished to deny most emphatically that this was correct. As for the two other charges contained in the resolution before the House—he was himself but a new member in the House at the time of the second session, and had arrived at it only recently from the country. He had therefore no personal knowledge of the matters referred to, while he was quite satisfied—as he believed the House was also—with the explanation of the Finance Minister, in whose integrity and ability he had the fullest confidence.

Hon. Mr. Hume, joined with his colleague, who had just spoken in denying the charge of falsification. He was acting as secretary, and he found occasionally, during the proceedings of the business meetings, that allegations were sometimes necessary. If Mr. Cotton was to blame for falsifying those records, he (Mr. Hume) must be in the same position. He did not think the Minister of Finance falsified those records, the member for Vancouver, he thought, had overstated the matter. This was a mistake, a mistake, a mistake. If Mr. Martin had been sincere in his charges, he would not have sat in the cabinet. As far as the other charges were concerned he had seen references to them in the various papers of the province, but had paid no heed to them.

Mr. Turner—I cannot help feeling that a resolution of this kind, which is really a personal resolution, is repugnant to that I consider right. I object very much to personal resolutions; several of them have been levied upon me. I must say that I think the hon. the leader of the government must have forgotten the facts that have taken place since he and I have been in this legislature. The personal resolution brought into the House was against the late Hon. Robert Dunsinuir, though that could not be applied to him because the matters it dealt with occurred years before he entered public life. The present leader of the government though now bitterly opposed to personal resolutions took an active part in that one against Mr. Dunsinuir. His name appeared in

division after division. Mr. Turner said he would have been very glad if that sort of feeling had been stamped out then. As had been very truly pointed out by Mr. Booth, the present government was perfectly cognizant of the fact that the hon. the member for Vancouver was against the members of the late government; not public charges, but charges of gross dereliction of duty. Those were circulated up and down the province in the newspapers of the time. He did not see any hon. gentleman on the opposite side who would protest to all protest against this sort of thing. Even in the newspaper owned and managed by the present hon. Minister of Finance there appeared the vilest slanders upon the characters of the members of the late government. Not more than six weeks ago it was promised that charges would be brought against him that would sweep him out of public life. Up to the present time nothing further had been heard of that charge. Had the gentleman opposite no protest to make against this kind of thing? Or were they willing to have their names put in the waste basket along with every platform that the ministry of the province were dishonest, not that they had made mistakes in duty, but were dishonest, and had defrauded the country. He was glad to see that the hon. leader of the government was in favor of putting the matter to rest, and that he had no more to say in the matter.

Hon. Mr. Carter-Cotton—Hear, hear. The charges that had been made against the Finance Minister, Mr. Booth continued, were in a manner paralleled by the infamous charges that had been put forward by the friends of the new government party just before the last general elections. The gentleman opposite had, however, not had the courage as yet to come forward and make their charges—as the third member for Vancouver had done—as they could be met and refuted. In conclusion, the member for North Victoria suggested that it would be well for the third member for Vancouver to withdraw his charges unless he could assure the House that he had had evidence to submit that that which he had insinuated.

Mr. Helmecken regarded the resolution before the House as in the nature of hitting below the belt, and therefore opposed it in toto. He accepted Hon. Mr. Cotton's explanation as satisfactory to the members of the House, and he was surprised, however, that neither Hon. Mr. Semlin nor any of his colleagues had not taken the first opportunity to corroborate the Finance Minister's statement, with respect to the alleged falsification of the records. He had been surprised, however, that neither Hon. Mr. Semlin nor any of his colleagues had not taken the first opportunity to corroborate the Finance Minister's statement, with respect to the alleged falsification of the records.

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Victoria's senior member thought that this would be taken as satisfactory, and hoped that the other ministers would be heard from to the same effect. As for the Gordon case, he agreed with Hon. Mr. Cotton that having been satisfactorily disposed of in 1894, it should not have been resurrected. Mr. Martin had not taken the trouble to explain the circumstances in this matter, and with a knowledge of those circumstances he personally thought that Hon. Mr. Cotton should be admitted for going no further than to disclose a confidence. The newspaper narrative of Hon. Mr. Cotton's Colorado experiences, with which Mr. Martin had favored the House, he characterized as a "beautiful fairy tale." Surely Hon. Mr. Cotton should be glad—as he would be under the circumstances—that the matter had been brought up, giving him opportunity to set himself right. This newspaper story he had reason to believe had nothing to do with the matter, and he was sorry for political purposes and self-interest for publication, and he had nothing but contempt for a man who would thus stab a man in the back. If this Denver newspaper publication was the best evidence in the matter of what the hon. gentleman had to offer, his case certainly failed. The charges that had been brought forward reminded him of the cowardly attacks that had been made against the third member for Vancouver in the matter of warrents, and he was as little in this charge, and he thought that the least the government of the day could do in honor and fair play would be to state publicly that there was not the slightest foundation for the charges that had been made, and that for political purposes in the most possible way. (Hear, hear.) He had prepared an amendment proposing to strike out the second and third paragraphs of the resolution, but if it were found of no effect, no attempt would be made by the government to deny the charges, and free discussion, he did not see that any good would be done by bringing the amendment forward.

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While the opposition had shown their desire to see that hon. gentleman get fair play, and insisted that he should be honorably dealt with, it would be remembered that he had not accorded fair play to his opponents.

Mr. Martin, closing the debate, expressed disappointment at the turn the debate had taken—opposition as well as government having apparently misinterpreted the resolution as one of condemnation, whereas it proposed merely that a fair and impartial investigation should be made, which would have permitted the Finance Minister the opportunity that it would be naturally thought he would welcome, to fully and finally establish the falsity of the charges against him—if so be that those charges were untrue. The Finance Minister did not appear to desire such an opportunity, and had opposed the proposition for an investigation, and it would seem that the House was disposed to whitewash him without asking for evidence such as could only be properly presented before a committee. His explanation, which had apparently satisfied a majority of the House, had been altogether out of order, inasmuch as he should have waited until the case was presented—had not been and could not be until the committee commenced work. In making these charges he had of course taken this risk that, if a committee upon inquiry found there was no substantial foundation for his case, he would get the worst of it under the circumstances. Hon. Mr. Cotton denied the proposition, and he dealt specifically with the charge of falsification of the records, he declared that not a single member of the government had dared to deny the facts—they had simply given their opinions. "What did he care for their opinions?" This was a question for the ministers, for the House and for the country. He would lay evidence before the country to show that the Minister of Finance could have made no mistake under the circumstances. The House might whitewash the Finance Minister; he was perfectly prepared for them to do that; he had done his duty—the rest was for the constituents.

In regard to the second charge he did not believe in going into the private life of any member—but this was not a question of private life, but of business honesty. Everything the Finance Minister had said was consistent with that portion of the paragraph in his resolution, and if a committee of the House looked into the circumstances, and Messrs. Wilson and Davis were examined, it would be disclosed whether the Finance Minister was entitled to occupy the position he did now. In regard to the Colorado charges, Mr. Helmecken had talked about a fair trial, but he thought it was Mr. Cotton's explanation that looked fishy. It would be noted that the article in question had been published in a Denver paper, and a month after the elections had taken place—which did not look as though they were intended for political purposes in British Columbia. He would like to see the members go before a committee, and if the charges were proved to be untrue, he would be the first person to apologize. He had done his duty in asking for the committee; if the House refused it that was something that he had nothing to do with. But he did not think the country would give the Finance Minister a whitewash without investigation.

Upon the House dividing, Messrs. Booth, Robertson, Clifford, Higgins, Brydon and Martin (Jos.) were found in the affirmative; while Messrs. Hall, Baker, Turner and Wilson voted with the opposition. Messrs. McPhillips, Irving, Eberts, McBride, Pooley, Prentice, A. W. Smith, withdrawing. Mr. Cotton not voting, and Mr. Dunsinuir being still absent from the city.

A Question Answered.

Mr. Kidd asked the Minister of Finance: "If the Government of the province intend to have another inspection made of the Burnaby small holdings, with a view to determining whether or not the householders are complying with the terms of their leases?"

2. If such is the intention, when will the inspection be made?

Hon. Mr. Cotton replied: "In Yes. 2. A government officer will be instructed to make an inspection at the earliest possible date."

Redistribution Adjourned.

Upon the order for a continuation of the redistribution question, in connection with Mr. Martin's want of confidence motion.

The government insisted upon the debate proceeding, while Mr. Martin—supported by the opposition—maintained that it had been well understood that this subject should be dropped. The third member for Vancouver pointed out that after taking so prominent a part in one debate, it would be unfair to expect him to take up the new subject at the same time, especially as he was physically incapacitated.

Hon. Mr. Semlin did not think the hon. gentleman's looks justified his plea. He looked as though he was still capable of giving the government a thorough scolding, and therefore insisted on the debate going on.

Mr. Martin protested with vigor against such an unfair advantage being taken of him, a threat of action making it extremely painful for him to speak, while it would require him at least three-quarters of an hour to complete his remarks on this important subject.

B. C. Troops for Africa.

Moving the adjournment of the House, Mr. Turner again directed attention to the energy in carrying out the wishes of the House, as expressed by resolution on the 9th January, with regard to the sending of a B. C. contingent to South Africa. He had taken that offer to be a serious one on the part of the government, and had therefore been glad to see the resolution passed. He had taken the offer as genuine and in earnest, and was abundant material for a good troop from B. C. had cordially supported the proposition. He could see no reason why the offer had not been accepted, the country being unanimous in favor of it. As a fact it had been previously promised upon the authorities, and the government had been in the habit of not making the offer of a contingent, and he was really a cheerleader in the matter. He had had the honor to be asked to lead the contingent, and he had done so with the province showed that the people were earnest in their patriotism. The people of the province had done their duty—but he did not think the government had. If he was wrong, if the government had done all in its power to

carry out the wishes of the House, it should have taken the House into its confidence, and made known the exact position of affairs. The contempt of the government for the political affairs of the province, and the refusal to accept of a provincial contingent, was returned to and the inability of the government was contrasted with the energetic patriotism of the Australasian governments. All that the B. C. administration had done was to present to the House an empty telegram from Ottawa which did not in any way answer the question that all the province was asking.

Hon. Mr. Semlin, replying, quite agreed that the offer of B. C. troops had not been made as an advertising bluff—it was genuine and worthy exhibition of patriotism. He expressed a desire to assist in the struggle in South Africa. Several telegrams had been received from Ottawa in connection with the contingent offer, but none showing that the Dominion had accepted the offer in specific terms, in which the offer had been made. It was to be inferred that the matter of transportation was the great stumbling block. He defied emphatically that the government had failed in patriotism. The question rested wholly with the Dominion government, he did not see how this government could force their position—whether it would be desirable or not.

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Lord Roberts's Force

He Has Over 50,000 Men Under His Command at Modder River.

Cronje's Retreat to Bloemfontein Has Been Out of Casualties at Mafeking

London, Feb. 15.—For the first time since the war began the British army is inside the Boer frontier. Lord Roberts, with at least 40,000 infantry, 7,000 cavalry and 15,000 guns, has gained the Magersfontein line before which the British forces have been camped for ten weeks, and with half of his corps he is not yet operating on Free State territory.

A battle has not as yet been fought, but large tactical advantages have been gained. The relief of Kimberley is within measurable reach, and the way to Bloemfontein is appreciably easier.

Lord Roberts's dispatches wired from inside the Free State and on the night after his arrival at Modder River, his advance had not been opposed by the Boers in force. Their parties melted away as the British moved forward. The Boer army is likely to be felt in a day or two, and a battle is consequently imminent. As to what force General Cronje has now at his disposal, and what he proposes making a stand against, the invaders, no one here knows anything. The data for conjectures are wholly wanting.

The forces immediately at the disposal of Lord Roberts are placed at 50,000 in a general way. These figures are rounded by the commands mentioned in the dispatches known to be with Lord Methuen. Quite possibly Lord Roberts has 10,000 or 20,000 more.

Communications Cut.

London, Feb. 16.—As nothing further from Lord Roberts has been communicated to the public, military adepts spend their time in studying maps, and topography and figuring out the possibilities of Lord Roberts's communications and what there is left for the Boers to do.

General Cronje's communications with Bloemfontein have already been cut. The best news England could hear would be that he elects to give battle among the low hills between the rivers. He should raise the siege of Kimberley and retreat to a point where he would prefer to fight. This retreat could be a long detour around the north, as seems to military students more practicable, he could withdraw to the north, using the railroad for his main line of heavy baggage, moving to Priesburg, a station and thence into Transvaal territory.

The Boers have made no preparations to defend Bloemfontein, and there is no particular reason why General Cronje should risk a battle to protect the capital of the Free State. Operations elsewhere are apparently suspended.

A correspondent writing from Chieveley on January 13th, says: "We are still hopeful of relieving Ladysmith."

Col. Baden-Powell in a dispatch from Mafeking, dated January 29th, after mentioning matters already sent up by telegram, gives his total casualties up to January 29th as follows: Killed—Five officers and 60 men. Wounded—Eight officers and 123 men. Missing—94 men.

No word has been received regarding General Buller's 12,000 men at Stormberg. The impression is that these forces are on the way to Lord Roberts.

The war office has issued orders for the formation of 21 new batteries and three battalions of infantry.

Boer Report.

Boer Lager, near Ladysmith, Tuesday, Feb. 13.—Yesterday Gen. Buller, with a small force, crossed the Tugela to the deserted British camp, where he encountered fifty Laagers, of whom thirteen were killed, five wounded and nine taken prisoners. One officer was seen to tell the British to fetch their wounded.

CANADIAN ITEMS.

(Associated Press.)

Toronto, Feb. 16.—Alfred Day, the well-known general secretary of the Ontario Provincial Sunday School Association, has resigned to take charge of the Michigan State Association.

The board of health reports for January show the total number of deaths in the province for that month was 1,743, ninety per cent. of the population having reported. In the corresponding month last year, with 98 per cent. of the population reporting, the total deaths were 2,154.

Hon. Sir Frank Smith, who has been sitting for some time, has taken a turn for the worse and is in a sinking condition. In his private capacity, would send the other 100.

"What guarantee have we of that?"

Hon. Mr. Cotton—The Dominion government proposes to wash its hands of the whole matter in connection with provincial contingents. Therefore, if B. C. wants to send a contingent, it is clearly stated that the province will have to pay their way through to Africa.

Mr. McPhillips continued that the patriotism of the opposition did not halt at Halifax, although that of the government apparently sent but that far. He thought that the action of the government in this important matter had discredited it in the eyes of the country. The government would be at the first opportunity, condemned by public opinion.

Mr. Helmecken—Does public opinion extend to the extent of \$300,000?

Mr. McPhillips observed that \$300,000 appeared to be a large sum, but a member for Gasarboon, although a little while since he had been quite ready to see a million of provincial money sunk in the depths of the sea, and without consulting the House at all. The government had been tried and found wanting, even in patriotism.

Mr. Deane held that the matter should be very seriously considered before so large an expenditure was involved should be enough to say that had he the money himself he would cheerfully vote it for the purpose.

Mr. Turner said that the matter having been discussed, as he desired it should be, he would withdraw the resolution.

The House then adjourned until Monday at the usual hour.

Montreal, Feb. 16.—At the annual meeting of the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Co., held today, the announcement was made that the company would increase its capital by allowing holders of five shares on record to February 23rd, to purchase one new share.

The old board of directors was re-elected.

Among the recent arrivals from the North were James Hume, proprietor of the Bennett hotel, and his bride. They came down to spend their honeymoon in this city. Mrs. Hume was formerly Miss Ellen Robertson, of Bennett. They were married at the Baptist parsonage at the usual hour.

First

Graphic A

Instance of

Documents

The Eastern coast district in which for the first time, Mr. Robertson to the descriptive of a commanding officer.

"After leaving out the Dou Cook's farm, the Boer army is likely to be felt in a day or two, and a battle is consequently imminent. As to what force General Cronje has now at his disposal, and what he proposes making a stand against, the invaders, no one here knows anything. The data for conjectures are wholly wanting.

The forces immediately at the disposal of Lord Roberts are placed at 50,000 in a general way. These figures are rounded by the commands mentioned in the dispatches known to be with Lord Methuen. Quite possibly Lord Roberts has 10,000 or 20,000 more.

Mr. Semlin continued, replying, quite agreed that the offer of B. C. troops had not been made as an advertising bluff—it was genuine and worthy exhibition of patriotism. He expressed a desire to assist in the struggle in South Africa. Several telegrams had been received from Ottawa in connection with the contingent offer, but none showing that the Dominion had accepted the offer in specific terms, in which the offer had been made. It was to be inferred that the matter of transportation was the great stumbling block. He defied emphatically that the government had failed in patriotism. The question rested wholly with the Dominion government, he did not see how this government could force their position—whether it would be desirable or not.

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