

finance, the commissioner of fisheries and the acting premier—all five in one—spent two and a half hours wrestling with the problem of how to avoid a reply to the pamphlet "The Crisis in British Columbia." (Laughter and loud applause.)

Gallery-Play, Abuse, Distortion.

Although my good friends of the Conservative Association had forgotten my existence, and were unkind enough to refuse me a ticket when I applied at their office, I managed to be present and had the privilege of hearing the speech, and for once at least seeing myself as others see me. Next morning I said to a friend, who was surprised to see me alive, and who asked what I thought of the speech, "It consisted of three parts: One-third gallery-play, one-third abuse of Cotsworth and the ministers, and one-third distortion of details and complete evasion of the main issues. These three parts were equal to the whole, which was a gallant attempt to deceive the public on issues vital to the life of the whole country." (Applause.) That was my opinion then and now that we have had it presented to the public in complete form, twice over, I see no reason whatever to change my estimate. The bulk of this speech is based on the ancient principle, "When you have no case abuse the plaintiff." Now Mr. Bowser and his supporters may really believe that the gallery-play and abuse of Mr. Cotsworth and the ministers, in which he indulged so freely, was in perfect keeping with the dignity of the many offices which he holds, but I can assure them that it will take more than two and a half hours of that kind of thing to convince the people of this province that the ministers who have had the courage of their convictions in publishing this pamphlet are either a group of simpletons or a crowd of bigoted political partisans. (Applause.) And I can also assure him that we have not the slightest intention of following his lead in that direction. (Loud applause.) Vituperation is not argument, and we are quite content to deal with the facts. Certainly we are not going to be dragged into any side issues; the main issue is too vastly important, and the people have brains enough to see on which side the real argument lies. So I am here to deal with facts, not fancies. I am not going to defend our position, for we are not on the defensive. We have succeeded in putting the attorney-general and his colleagues on their defense, and my business tonight, as spokesman for my brethren is simply to strip bare the subterfuge and false statements of

Mr. Bowser and show you that his defense is not a defense at all, but

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a specious attempt to cloud the issues. (Applause and interruption, cries of "Put him out!") Never mind, friends! Let him slumber down, I'm Irish myself. (Loud laughter.) Hear in mind that Mr. Bowser, on page 4 of his speech, claims to give the reply of the government to our pamphlet and twice over, on pages 6 and 15 he states he will make "the best defense possible." To assist him in this defense, he has access to all the government files and records and the complete control and influence of the government staff at Ottawa, so I claim that if "the best" is in his power" breaks down, the case for the government is absolutely gone, and the whole people of British Columbia have a right to the investigation we demand. ("Hear, hear!")

Lucas' Libel Suit.

Now, first, let me take this much-discussed Lucas' libel suit to which Mr. Bowser devotes over three pages of his oration. All over the province I have met men who believed that the Ministerial Union had fallen down badly upon this point. The "News-Advertiser" had done some of its finest work on this point, and with the help of Mr. Lucas' lawyer sons had scattered abroad the story that three of our colleagues had definitely sworn we had no proof of anything whatever in the pamphlet beyond the unsupported statements of Mr. Cotsworth. Even Mr. Bowser repeats this on page 17 where he says: "By the evidence given on oath they apparently take Mr. Cotsworth's statement for everything which appears in the document." And again, on page 40, "I have shown you by their sworn evidence that they depend entirely on Cotsworth, they depend absolutely on him." But all of them know perfectly well that every question put to us in the "examination for discovery" in the libel suit, and every answer made by us, had to do with nothing whatever in the pamphlet beyond this one paragraph of six lines and a half. Not another single point in the whole 32 pages was at issue and Mr. Bowser knew it. He also knew that at Hamilton hall and in this hall I produced a mass of original documents in support of our statements. (Applause.)