A REVELATION

The Semlin-Cotton Government Reward Political Friend By a Gift of Untold Millions From the Public Domain.

The New Vancouver Coal Company Presented With Ten Thousand Acres of Coal Lands—Significant Command to Keep Matter Private.

Scandalous Transaction Well Concealed for Four Months—Undertaking to Defend in Court Claim of Beneficiary—Provincial Right to Royalty Waived.

(From Friday's Daily Colonist.)

The following official documents disclose the most extraordinary conduct on the part of the government of British Columbia of which there is any record.

The late hour at which the copies of the several documents were received makes it impossible to give more than a brief summary of the facts. It is well known that a suit is pending in the courts between the Wellington Colliery Company and the New Vancouver Coal Company, involving the title to the coal under Departure Bay, to which the province is also a party and in which the Dominion government at one time intervened. Pending the determination of the lawsuit, the Semlin government has granted the property in dispute and a vast area besides, or in all about 10,000 acres of the most valuable coal lands in Canada, to the New Vancouver Coal Company, without receiving a dollar for it or exacting a cent of royalty.

The law in regard to the disposal of coal lands by the crown is well known. It must be done after public notice, and a royalty of five cents per ton must be collected. As will be observed, the grant in this case was made without public notice, and the coal is given to the company outright.

The first document is the copy of a letter from Mr. W. S. Gore, deputy commissioner of lands and works, to Hon. Joseph Martin, and is as follows:

Lands and Works Department.
Victoria, March 12, 1900.

Sir,—Referring to your letter of even date, in which you say that on the 18th November last a crown grant was, you understand, issued to the New Vancouver Coal & Land Company of certain coal lying under the harbor of Nanaimo, and asking to be informed fully what records there are in this department with regard to this crown grant, and what knowledge I have of the matter, and also what is the usual course with reference to the issuing of a crown grant of lands or minerals belonging to this province so far as this department is concerned.

In reply I have then to nor to state that this department has no record of such a crown grant as you refer to. I have ascertained, however, by reference to the Provincial Secretary's department that letters patent were issued to the New Vancouver Coal & Land Company upon the date you name, and which is no doubt the document you have reference to.

The only knowledge I had of this matter was a brief conversation on one or two occasions with the late chief commissioner, Mr. Cotton, on the subject, and having more particular reference to the preparation of a plan to accompany said letters patent.

It is the usual practice to issue all crown grants of land or minerals from this office and to retain duplicates thereof on file here for future reference.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,
W. S. GORE,
Deputy Commissioner of L. and W.

Hon. Joseph Martin, Premier, Victoria, B. C.

The second document shows the preliminary step in this outrage, by which a valuable asset of the province has been absolutely given away without money or without price. We are not given a copy of the request referred to in Mr. Henderson's letter, but it is not very material.

To His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor in Council:

The undersigned has the honor to report for the consideration of the council the following, in reference to the request of the New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, limited, that its right to mine under that portion of the sea commonly known as Nanaimo harbor and the waters adjacent thereto be confirmed and better defined:

That the crown had intended to confer such right in 1855 to the said company's predecessors in title, and that the said company and its said predecessors in title have been in uninterrupted enjoyment of said right since the said year 1855, and that such right has always been recognized by the crown and the government of the province, and that in the exercise of the said right the said company has bona fide expended large sums of money in establishing extensive works and installing machinery, and has employed and still employs large numbers of British subjects in and about such works, and to recommend that letters patent do issue to the said company under the great seal of the province in conformity with the draft hereto annexed.

Dated this 13th day of November, A. D. 1899.

ALEXANDER HENDERSON,
Attorney-General.

Approved this 18th day of November, A.D. 1890.
C. A. SEMLIN,
Presiding Member of the Executive Council.

The next step in the business was to bring the matter under the consideration of the executive council, and the result was the most magnificent free gift ever given by a provincial government in Canada to any individual or corporation. There have been other instances where public property has been parted with for inadequate consideration, but this is the first where a monumental fortune has been handed over without anything whatever being given for it. Here is the order-in-council.

At the executive council chamber, Victoria, B. C., the 18th day of November, A. D. 1899.

Present:
The Honorable—
Mr. Semlin, (in the chair).
Mr. Henderson,
Mr. Carter-Cotton.

On the recommendation of the Honorable Attorney-General, His honor the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, by and with the advice of the executive council, doth order as follows:

That letters patent in conformity with the draft hereunto annexed be issued to the New Vancouver Coal Mining & Land Company, limited, confirming to the said company the right to mine the coal and coal substances lying under that portion of the sea now commonly known as Nanaimo habor and the waters adjacent thereto;

And also the right to keep for their own use and benefit all such coal substances so mined free from all royalties and tolls.

A. CAMPBELL REDDIE,
Deputy Clerk, Executive Council.

Approved and ordered this 18th day of November, A. D. 1899.
THOS. R. McINNES,
Lieutenant-Governor.

When this precious document reached the Provincial Secretary's office, Mr. Reddie, the permanent deputy, appears to have been somewhat startled, but like a conscientious officer he was about to take the ordinary course and gazette it, when he was met by instructions that the matter was to be kept secret Mr. Reddie explains the failure to gazette it as follows.

Provincial Secretary's Office,
Victoria, March 13, 1900.

Sir,—With reference to your letter of this date in regard to the issue of letters patent to the New Vancouver Coal & Land Company, and in reply to your question respecting the memo attached to the order-in-council in this connection, I desire to say that, as it is customary to gazette letters patent, before doing so in this case I caused inquiry to be made of the Deputy Attorney-General, and I was informed that it was not intended that they should be published.

The authority given to the said company to mine coal being in the form of letters patent, the document was recorded in and issued from this office. With regard to crown grant of lands, these when received from the department of lands are sealed, signed by the provincial secretary, the numbers of grants entered in a register, and then forwarded to the Lieutenant-Governor for his signature; they are returned to this office and sent to the department of lands.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,
A CAMPBELL REDDIE,
Deputy Provincial Secretary.

The Honorable the Premier.

The Deputy Attorney-General was called upon later to cast what light he could upon the affair, and he said:

Attorney-General's Office.
Victoria, March 14, 1900.

The Honorable Joseph Martin, Q. C., Premier:

Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 14th instant, in which you state that you are advised by Mr. Reddie, the deputy provincial secretary, that he was instructed by me not to publish in the Gazette the letters patent granted to the New Vancouver Coal & Land Company on the 18th November last, and asking to be informed how I came to give such instructions to Mr. Reddie.

The instructions were not given directly to Mr. Reddie, but to Mr. Worsfold. Mr. Worsfold asked me if the said letters patent should be published in the Gazette. I told him it was a matter that I could not give him any instructions upon, as the Attorney-General was attending to it himself. The Attorney-General was not in his office at the time, being then I think in Nanaimo, so Mr. Worsfold asked me if I would find out what the Attorney-General wished the department of the Provincial Secretary to do in the matter. It was some time afterwards—as far as I can recollect about three weeks—before I had an opportunity of having a conversation with the Attorney-General. In the interval I think he was engaged in the coal mines arbitration at Nanaimo. I did eventually ask the Attorney-General whether he wished to have the said letters patent published in the Gazette, and he instructed me to give directions that they be not published.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,
H. A. MacLEAN,
Deputy Attorney-General.

There was nothing then to be done to perfect this splendid gift to the New Vancouver Company except to hand them the deed of the property, which reads as follows:

"Victoria, by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, defender of the faith: to all to whom these presents shall come, greeting:

"Whereas by our letters patent bearing date the 13th day of January in the twelfth year of our reign, we did of our grant and confirm (inter alia) all that the island called Vancouver Island, together with all royalties of the seas upon the coast thereof, and all mines royal thereto belonging unto the governor and company of adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay and their successors; and we did also thereby for us our heirs and successors make create and constitute the said governor and company for the time being and their successors the true and absolute lords and proprietors of the same territories, limits and places (saving always the faith and allegiance and sovereign dominion due to us our heirs and successors for the same). To have, hold, possess and enjoy the same and all and singular other the premises thereby granted with their and every of their rights, members royalties and appurtenances whatsoever to them the said governor and company of adventurers of England and their successors forever, in fee and common socage;

"And whereas the said governor and company of adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay did, on or about the fifth day of May, 1885, purchase from us for the sum of £6,193, all that territory or estate, lands, tenements, hereditaments, rights, easements, privileges and appurtenances hereinafter mentioned for the exclusive use and benefit of them the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay, their successors and assigns absolutely freed and discharged of and from any and all conditions and provisoes contained in said letters patent:

"And whereas it was intended by us and by the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay, their successors or assigns should be entitled under and by virtue of the said purchase to have, hold and enjoy the exclusive right to mine for all kinds of coal and coal substances under that portion of the sea adjacent to the said territory or estate and lands and hereditaments, said portion of the sea including the waters now generally known as Nanaimo harbor, and the waters adjacent to Newcastle, Cameron, and Douglas, or Protection, Islands, and to keep all such coal and coal substances for the exclusive use and benefit of the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay, their successors or assigns free from any and all royalties or tolls to us or our successors;

"And whereas by indenture bearing date the thirtieth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, made between the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay, of the first part, James Nicol, therein described, of the second part, and the Vancouver Coal Mining & Land Company, limited, of the third part, the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay, after reciting as therein recited and for the consideration therein mentioned did grant and convey unto the said Vancouver Coal Mining & Land Company, limited, their successors and assigns all that territory or estate and lands and hereditaments situate in Vancouver Island, in the district of Nanaimo and the islands called Newcastle Island, Cameron Island and Douglas Island, and containing in the whole by estimation six thousand one hundred and ninety-three acres or thereabouts, be the same more or less, which said territory or estate, lands and hereditaments with the boundaries or abuttals thereof and more particularly delineated and described in the map or plan endorsed on these now reciting presents, together with the mines and minerals thereunder and the machinery, buildings, barges, horses, cattle, rights, easements, privileges, and all other things whatsoever thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining, or with the same territory or estate, lands and hereditaments or any part thereof now or at any time or times heretofore demised, leased, held, used, occupied, or enjoyed, or accepted, reputed, deemed, taken, or known as part, parcel or member thereof (except the shop or trade, goods in the nonetheless to gazette letters patent, the said Governor and Company and the coals iron or other minerals which shall have been raised or gotten from, or on the said hereditaments and premises before the day of the date thereof, and liberty to the said Governor and Company, their servants and workmen, or assigns, with horses, carts, carriages and other things, to enter upon the said premises for the purpose of removing or carrying away the same). And all the estate, right, title, interest, inheritance, use, trust, property, profit, possession, claim and demand whatsoever, both at law and in equity as well of the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay, as also of the said James Nicol in, to, out, of, or upon the same premises and every part and parcel thereof;

"And whereas the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay did intend by the said indenture to effectively transfer all the estate or interest of whatsoever nature acquired by them under and by virtue of the said purchase from us, and intended so to be acquired aforesaid to the said Vancouver Coal Mining & Land Company, Limited, their successors and assigns:

"And whereas the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, the said Vancouver Coal Mining & Land Company, Limited, and their successors, the New Vancouver Coal Mining & Land Company, Limited, have continuously since the date of said purchase from us exercised all the rights, privileges and manorial rights attached to the said territory, or estate lands and hereditaments, and in pursuance of such rights, privileges and manorial rights have been continuously since the aforesaid date and still are exercising the sole and exclusive right and privilege of mining for all kinds of coal and coal substances under the said portion of the sea, and of keeping for their sole use and benefit all such coal and coal substances so mined as aforesaid free from any and all royalties or tolls to us or our successors, and have in the exercise of such rights expended large sums of money in establishing extensive plants and machinery, and have employed and are still employing large numbers of our subjects:

"And whereas the said territory or estate and lands and hereditaments, with all the rights and privileges, easements and appurtenances thereto attached or held therewith are now vested in the New Vancouver Coal Mining & Land Company, Limited, hereinafter called the said company, and disputes have arisen and may arise between the said company and adjoining proprietors with respect to the said company's rights in the premises, and the said company have requested us to assure, confirm and better define their rights in the premises, which it is our pleasure to do:

"Now know ye that we, being moved by the reasons before mentioned, do by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, grant, release, assure and confirm unto the said company, their successors and assigns the sole and exclusive right to mine for, raise, get and win all the coal and coal substances whatsoever lying under that portion of the sea adjacent to the said territory or estate and hereditaments, said portion of the sea being the area colored red on the plan hereto annexed, and also the right to keep for their own use and benefit all such coal and coal substances so mined, raised, got or won, free from any or all royalties or tolls to us, our heirs or successors, forever.

"In testimony whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent, and the great seal of the province of British Columbia to be hereto affixed, witness His Honor Thomas Robert McInnes, lieutenant-governor of our province of British Columbia and its dependencies at our Government House in our City of Victoria, the 18th day of November, A. D. 1899, and the sixty-second year of our reign.

"By Command,
"C. A. SEMLIN,
"Provincial Secretary."

Letters to The Editor

THE PROVINCE.

Sir: I am much pleased to see that one prominent young Liberal has the courage to express his opinions on the miserable and unprecedented condition to the which our country has been brought. I am sure all who respect a reliable and stable government will appreciate Col. Gregory for withdrawing his confidence from a man who by his acts for the last eighteen months has proved himself unworthy of such confidence.

Mr. Martin's programme of public schemes is as transparent as the cunning which prompted it. The programme is very plausible to those who do not consider. Take the railway from the Coast to the Boundary country, about 300 miles in round numbers, which would cost to build from $30,000 to $40,000 per mile—but let us say the smaller sum. This would cost nine millions. Supposing the Dominion government contributed one million—leaving eight millions to be raised on the now much damaged credit of the country—could it be done? I think not. And if it could, railway ownership by the province would be too dangerous and currupting a scheme to be controlled by hungry politicians.

W. J. MACDONALD.

THE COMING ELECTION.

Sir: I observe His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor promises there shall be a general election in time to have estimates passed before the fiscal year is over, and, on such a question, while the Premier may advise, it is the duty and the prerogative of His Honor to say when the election shall take place, due regard being had to the requirements of the country. On the supposition then that a general election is near at hand, the constituencies must consider what course they intend to pursue. On the Mainland especially I see some leaders want to have the contest conducted on purely party lines. That means giving Mr. Joseph Martin the only chance of getting a party to support him. In many constituencies, given a Liberal and Conservative candidate, a Martin candidate may slip in between them. Any one accustomed to political contests should see that at a glance.

The election should be conducted on the lines Martin and anti-Martin. It is of much more importance to rid the province of that gentleman than to establish any portentous platform.

There ought to be some arrangement made whereby candidates acceptable to both of the old parties should be nominated and the voters asked to support such nominees against Martin. This can be done if it is only entertained on the give and take plan, on the basis of mutual concession for one common cause.

COMMON SENSE.

March 14, 1900.

RECOGNIZE HIS VALUE.

Sir: To a student of provincial politics for the past 13 years, it seems rather strange that all this discussion has arisen regarding the proposed introduction of party lines in the coming general election. Have we not tried long enough to manage the province without them? It seems to me that the whole trouble up to the present has been that personalism dominated our affairs. The consequent combination would never have obtained power had not the Mainland been animated to a large extent by unreasoning dislike of Mr. Turner. Previous to that the late Theo. Davie was the object of distrist, also unjustly, and earlier, in 1890, "Honest John" Robson was burned in effigy at New Westminster under the auspices of J. C. Brown & Co.

Mr. Charles Wilson, Q.C., was duly elected leader of the Conservative party at a convention, and in my opinion fully realizes the unanimous desire of the province for an honest, able and disinterested man at the head of affairs. He has firstly a long residence in British Columbia, and (originally by a working and later a professional connection) an uninterrupted knowledge of the mining industry for more than 20 years. His practical mining and later legal training enabled him better than any other man in public life firstly to realize and understand the needs of mining legislation, and secondly, to place it on the statutes in proper form.

He resided for a long period on the Island, and is now on the Mainland, and his worst enemy would refrain from saying that any sectionalism would influence any legislation introduced under his auspices.

His parliamentary career in this province as one of the members for this city was of a creditable nature, and would recommend itself to all sections of the province.

He would certainly not be open to the objection which might be urged against some other politicians (that mercenary motives might influence him), as his professional income is of sufficient dimensions to preclude such assertions.

We, as Conservatives, therefore have a most able man of long residence in this province and of unblemished character as our standard-bearer, and should take this opportunity of obtaining the reins of power not from any motive of party advantage, but to ensure stable and equitable government to our fair province. If any voter will take the trouble to go over the roster he will find that practically all the destinable and available men in public life in British Columbia are Conservatives.

JACKY.

MR. KELLIE'S VIEWS.

Sir: That we are face to face with a political crisis goes without question, but but we have also to meet a more eventful contingency, a paralysis of mining operations, if some radical and probably harsh measure is not taken at the present moment to avert the evil. It strikes me that no ordinary argument or pressure that may be brought to bear on His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will have any influence with His Honor. Martin's defeat at the polls will place the Governor in an unenviable light. It practically means his removal from the honorable position he now holds, if the Dominion Premier's words indicate anything. Hon. Joseph Martin must have time to meet the electorate and win them over, if such a thing can occur, therefore any excuse he can propose will be used to obtain delay. The revision of the voters' list affords a pretence, and no doubt other excuses, after revision, will be taken to allow of his holding power for a longer period. To point out how business will suffer, and mining development will be checked, I wish to show up one incident that greatly affects a most promising section of my riding. Before the government's defeat, I asked Mr. Cotton to have a bridge constructed over Fish creek, seven miles from Compaliz, where the mountains cut off the valley by a perpendicular cliff 200 feet in height, and a crossing has to be secured at that point. Probably there are a score of mining companies operating up the river, and the bridge is an absolute necessity. After six weeks it would be impossible to build the bridge, as piles have to be driven to make the centre pier. This cannot be done after the middle of May, as the melting snows on the mountain slopes send down a tremendous volume of water that would make any attempt to construct it during the hot summer months futile. I have pointed out all these circumstances to Hon. Joseph Martin on three occasions, but to no purpose. He distinctly refused, stating as an excuse that he had no power. The following section of the Consolidated Statutes shows clearly the intent of the legislature, and also shows the lieutenant-governor in council has unlimited powers to deal with such questions:

"Chap. 166, an act respecting revenue, section 41, B., sub-section B. C.: If any public work or building require an immediate outlay for the repair thereof, or any other occasion arises when any expenditure not foreseen or provided for by the legislature is urgently and immediately required for the public good, then, upon the report of the minister of finance that there is no parliamentary provision, or that the vote is expended, or upon the report of the minister having charge of the particular service in question that the expenditure is necessary, the lieutenant-governor in council may order a special warrant to be issued for the amount estimated to be required, and the issuance of such warrant shall be sufficient authority to the auditor to authorize the payment out of the treasury to the amount so ordered to be expended or paid."

The incident quoted is only one of many that might be used to show the deplorable condition that will result from the mining sections not having proper roads and bridges. It must react on all business interests and create stagnation all over the province if there is not prompt action taken. Owing to the above circumstances, and for the reasons stated, I would suggest a remedy. It is harsh in the extreme, but the country's interests demand that the surgeon's knife be at once applied. It seems that the Governor cannot be dismissed without a resolution from both the Senate and the House of Commons. That course seems the only feasible plan to end the present political fiasco. Let our Liberal friends bring pressure and influence to bear on Sir Wilfrid Laurier to that end. Let our Conservative friends bring pressure to bear on their friends in the House of Commons and Senate to influence the Senate with a view of getting the support in that direction. Surely we can work in harmony for once to make a supreme effort to get rid of a Governor whose blundering incapacity on one occasion was directly responsible for calling a politician after Mr. Turner's dismissal who had no following, and whose second attempt to solve the political problem has resulted in calling in a member of the legislature who had neither follower nor friend in the house. Let us pull together with one mighty effort, and by so doing we will avert the impending disaster in business circles and mining development.

J. M. KELLIE.

THE "NEXT SESSION"—ARE SPECIAL WARRANTS LEGAL?

Sir: The visit of leading merchants and manufacturers to Government House on Tuesday was an opportune and commendable event. The frank courtesy which they met at His Honor's hands left little to be desired. The deputation impressed on His Honor's mind the absolute necessity that exists for an early dissolution and the assembling of the new house before the 30th of June, emphasizing their remarks with proofs of the losses in business and the decay in public confidence at the mining districts consequent on the shutting down of the mines and the failure of the late house to pass legislation of a remedial character. His Honor referred the deputation to the prorogation speech, in which the pledge is given that another session will be held before the close of the fiscal year, on the 30th of June, and said that he saw no reason why that pledge should be departed from. With this assurance the country must rest content. I think I can reply a foreshadowing of an intention to figure out the situation for himself, and if it can be shown to His Honor's satisfaction that a session of a house elected after the May revision cannot be held in June he will order an immediate dissolution. This country has been taught to look to the country at large, and ought to be satisfactory to Mr. Martin and his colleagues. The attempt to govern the country with special warrants will be found to be a very dangerous experiment when the facts come before a legislature that is sure to be hostile to existing conditions. It would be profitable to inquire as to the responsibility of the Lieutenant-Governor and his ministry in such a case. A refusal by the legislature to recognize the liability under ordinary circumstances would amount to repudiation. It is an extreme step which would only be taken under stress of great provocation and irritation; and it cannot be denied that there already exist elements of dissatisfaction that may be welded into a hostile shape when the house gets together. In 1894 Mr. Theo. Davie called the legislature to meet early in November—three months in advance of the usual time—to pass a $400,000 loan bill, the proceeds of which were required to meet a bank overdraft, made without legislative authority. The house was a friendly one, and although there were murmurs of discontent amongst the "faithful," the bill was passed and the overdraft paid off. But suppose the general elections had gone against Mr. Davie's government, would an indemnity have been possible? And if not possible, upon whom would the loss have fallen—the Lieutenant-Governor, the members of the government individually, or upon the bank? These are questions which it would be well for the parties most concerned in the present emergency to lay to mind, so that they may take no false step. Should there be no session before the 30th of June, or should it be held by the best authorities that the present ministry is not a ministry at all within the meaning of the Constitution Act (and we have the despatch of His Honor of August last to Mr. Semlin, wherein he complains of the failure of the then premier to surround him with a full cabinet), startling complications may arise and the repudiation of contracts and overdrafts made by an illegally-formed ministry may be held to be perfectly proper and as not affecting the credit of the province in the least.

I have stated in previous letters that the Lieutenant-Governor's action in declining to allow Mr. Semlin to patch up his ministry meets with my hearty approval. I spoke and voted to that effect in the house. In his treatment of the late ministry I have but one fault to find with Mr. McInnes: He was too good. They were fairly defeated on the first day of the session, when they lost control of the house. If His Honor had stepped in then, or even a day or two later, when the ministry were only sustained by the casting vote of the Speaker, he would have conferred a lasting service on the country by saving two months of fruitless attempts at legislation and preventing present complications; or had complications arisen the strain would have been over long ago and the new house well ahead with legislation. His Honor's good nature and forbearance overcame his better judgment, and he and the country suffer in consequence.

Allow me to pursue the constitutional branch of the subject a little further. The constitution act calls for six ministers—five with portfolios, one without. Mr. Martin's ministry consists of himself and two others. The most strenuous exertions have failed to bring the cabinet up to the required number. Mr. Martin has had fourteen days allowed him in which to complete the work, and he is still three short. Is the Governor justified in longer accepting the advice of a gentleman who cannot surround him with a full cabinet of advisers? The power of dissolution resides in the Lieutenant-Governor. Whether Mr. Martin advises the step or not His Honor can (and should) demand that the dissolution be immediate, so that the verdict of the country may be passed upon his recent action in calling on Mr. Martin and the difficulties that may attach to the illegal expenditure of public money by an illegally constituted ministry be avoided. His Honor's answer to the deputation leads me to think that such a step is contemplated, provided it can be shown that a session cannot be held in time if the elections should be held off until after revision.

D. W. HIGGINS.

RISE ABOVE PARTY.

Sir,—In common with many others who have the welfare of British Columbia at heart, and who heartily desire to put an end to the damaging and chaotic condition of provincial interests, I have been very glad to read your articles of late in which you so intelligently impress upon our fellow electors the urgent necessity of rising above strict party lines to rid us of the charlatanism which is now, alas, such an untoward and hurtful factor in the administration of local affairs. The exigency of federal party has given us a Lieutenant-Governor who, to say the least, has certainly precipitated our misfortunes, and if there ever was a time when our necessities require strong counteracting influences, and the selection of men irrespective of party to extricate us from the depressing difficulties under which the country is at present laboring, it is undoubtedly now. The damage to our credit abroad, the desolation in mining districts—a short time ago so prosperous and promising brought about by the immature and crude eight-hour law, the certainty of further troubles—scarcely hidden in some of the measures proposed by the Premier are surely sufficient to stimulate us to united action, the guiding star of which should be our pressing local needs and the selection of the best men available to give effect to them. No one will deny that such advocates as we desire can be found in either the Conservative or Liberal party, but the principles which distinguish these great parties in federal politics have nothing whatever to do at present with what we should now have especially in local administration, and certainly, their introduction at such an inopportune period will tend to present and annul that unity of purpose so necessary to rid ourselves of the incubus and burden oppressive to bear, and painfully objectionable in every possible way. I can easily understand that the time may come when the action of the people on federal lines might be unobjectionable in the province and useful to the party most concerned in the Dominion at large, but it appears to me that if the exponents of either or both these parties cause a divergence of the vital issues now at stake by coming to have the forthcoming election on party lines, and a regime is thereby elected to which a large majority is opposed they are courting a very serious responsibility, for which they alone will be distinctly answerable. The resolution passed last evening is good and proper, as far as it goes, but if some practicable attempt is not made to give effect to it what good will have been accomplished. If a British Columbia party is necessary for such a purpose why should there be any delay in forming an association to invite similar action all over the province, pledged in the first instance to oppose the makeshift of a government that, "willy-nilly," has been jostled upon us, and secondly, to adopt measures by which the country will have speedy relief from the doubt, the disgrace and the ruin which, notwithstanding all our splendid and unlimited resources are confining and paralyzing the best efforts of those engaged in developing them.

I. W. POWELL.

THE OUTRAGE ON THE CONSTITUTION.

Sir,—In my remarks at the meeting on Thursday I did not attribute, as reported, the condition of affairs at Kootenay to the eight-hour law. I said the country was suffering for want of legislation and that my correspondents at Kootenay express the opinion that the eight-hour law is responsible for the calamity which seems impending in the southern part of the province. Be this as it may, there can be no relief until there is legislation. My objection to the first three lines of the resolution passed by the meeting was this: If His Honor believed that Mr. Martin had a sufficient following in the house, his action in calling on him to form a government is not censurable. Indeed, down to and including that action, his position was defensible on constitutional grounds. It is to his course since he was given to understand that Mr. Martin has no following in the house and that he cannot fill his ministry to which I enter a protest. Every day, every hour that Mr. Martin continues as adviser to His Honor an outrage is perpetrated on the constitution and the very first principles of responsible government are being trampled underfoot.

D. W. HIGGINS.

THE PROVINCE WITHDRAWS

From Further Action in Connection With the Coal Mines Dispute.

(From Friday's Daily Colonist.)

In the Supreme court chambers yesterday morning, before Mr. Justice Drake, Deputy Attorney-General MacLean, on behalf of the government in the case of British Columbia and the New Vancouver Coal Co., Limited, plaintiffs, vs. the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway Co., defendants, applied for an order that the applicant's name be struck out of this action, and that he be at liberty to discontinue the same as far as the government is concerned. The order was granted. This is the result of the action of the Semlin government in issuing letters patent to the New Vancouver Coal Company for the coal lands which have been operated for many years under the sea, opposite the E. & N. townsite at Newcastle and comprising several thousand acres.

Mr. A. P. Luxton appeared for the E. & N. Railway Co.; and H. D. Helmcken, Q. C., M. P. P., on behalf of the New Vancouver Coal Mining & Land Company.

FACTORY HANDS' MISFORTUNE.

New York, March 16.—The American Tobacco Company discharged its entire list of over 500 employees, men and women, to-day, from the cigar factory in this city, and it will move its plant to its factories in Richmond, Va., Baltimore, Cincinnati and Lancaster, Pa.

For any case of nervousness, sleeplessness, weak stomach, indigestion, dyspepsia, use Carter's Little Nerve Pills. Prefer is sure. The only nerve medicine for the price in market.

Party or No Party?

Divergence of Opinion as to Means for Restoring Good Government.

Vancouver and Kootenay Conservatives Favor a Test on Federal Issues.

Victoria Postpones Its Decision --Liberals Call a Provincial Convention.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Vancouver, March 16.—At a meeting of Conservatives to-night a resolution to stand by the decision of the convention to fight the coming elections on party lines was carried by 148 to 5. Messrs. F. C. Cotton, C. E. Tisdall and L. G. McPhillips were prominent speakers and expressed the fear that Mr. Martin would carry the country unless all parties but Martinites combined to defeat him. There was much party enthusiasm at the meeting, and the late government was condemned by a score of speakers, who said in effect that the government were elected to defeat the Turner party, and though they had served that purpose had proved weaker than the Turner party itself.

KOOTENAY ALSO FOR PARTY.

Nelson, March 16.—The following resolution was adopted on a standing votes, amid cheers, by a convention of delegates representing Greenwood, Phoenix, Columbia, Grand Forks, Rossland, Trail, Slocan City, Silverton, New Denver, Nelson, Ymir and other points:

"That the origin of the Liberal-Conservative party may be traced to a crisis in the history of the country which necessitated a union of the best men of all parties for the unification and progress of the Dominion of Canada.

"A serious crisis exists in the Province of British Columbia at the present time. The principles of Liberal-Conservatism contain the only remedy for one-man government, sectionalism and the undue influence of political adventurers.

"Therefore be it resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting the forthcoming provincial elections should be conducted upon party lines, the Liberal-Conservative party relying not solely upon party affiliation in federal politics, but also upon the broad principles of Liberal-Conservatism which will remedy the violent abuses of government in this province."

VICTORIA CONSERVATIVES.

Local Political Situation Engages the Attention of a Large Gathering.

Foresters' hall was well filled last evening on the occasion of the adjourned meeting of the Liberal-Conservative Association. The president, H. D. Helmcken, M. P. P., occupied the chair, and addresses were delivered by prominent Liberal-Conservatives, the principal subject of discussion being what effect will prove most effective in freeing the province from the present political blight and restore good government.

The telegram from Nelson to the Colonist was read, indicating the course to be followed by the Conservatives of Kootenay.

After the matter had been discussed from various standpoints, decision was deferred until an adjourned meeting to be held on Tuesday next at the same place—Foresters' hall.

A LIBERAL CONVENTION.

Executive of Vancouver Association Dissent from Decision of Provincial Executive.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Vancouver, March 16.—An extraordinary meeting of the executive of the Liberal association of Vancouver city, took place last night, with twenty-six out of the thirty members present. After the meeting was addressed at length by Hon. Joseph Martin, a discussion took place as to the advisability of calling a convention for the province. The following resolution was unanimously passed.

"Moved by Jas. McQueen, seconded by J. C. McLagan: That whereas the provincial executive having been appealed to by the Rossland association to call a convention, at a meeting attended by only seven, refused to call a convention; and whereas at Westminster convention of 1897, Liberal, agreed to support the then provincial opposition and formulated a platform; and whereas it is advisable that the party should take united action at this crisis;

"Therefore, the Liberals of Vancouver call a convention of the Liberals of the province for the purpose of organizing and deciding upon what action to take—said convention to be called for April 5th next—each provincial electoral district being entitled to send ten delegates for each member they send to the legislature."

Chafed Skins, Piles, Scalds, Cuts, Chilblanes, Chapped Hands, Sore Eyes,

Sunburn, Earache, Neuralgic and Rheumatic Pains, Throat Colds and Skin Ailments are Quickly relieved by the use of . . . .

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Henderson Bros., druggists, Victoria, B.C.

People Move In Pol

Well Attended Meeting Di the Situation and Con Important Decisio

Premier Martin, the G and Partyism Stro Condemned.

(From Friday's Daily Colo

"Resolved, that this meeti the action of the Lieutenant-G summoning the Hon. Joseph the premiership as fraught w to the best interests of the p British Columbia, condemns announced by Mr. Martin as ous and hurtful to business a cial development and believes t be ripe for the union of all pe ing these views in an effort the Martin ministry, when the polls, and place in office untrammelled by federal po seek to advance the material the province in every possible

* * *

With hardly a dissenting above resolution was passed a attended citizens' meeting last the Philharmonic hall. It sets clearly and succinctly the spir discussion. While there were some differences of opinion as pediency of introducing fed lines at the present time, it m that the temper of the audienc of direct antipathy to Hon. Jo tin and his policy. The meet representative one, brief addre delivered by leaders, locally, o minion parties, and considera was thrown upon the situati presents at present many gra Before proceeding with the ele chairman, Mr. C. H. Lugrin, plained why the meeting had b it was, he said, the result of cussion among a few private who thought it well that the dinary, everyday people should ed an opportunity to give exp their views. Personally he too tle stock in political organiza believed that the people had right to act as any political or in matters of this kind. He a it most pernicious that should be formed to act for and bind them to a choice of Personally, he thought that should be done and done quick wise chaos would come. In hi the action of Lieutenant-Gover Innes in calling upon Mr. Marti a government could not be just would agree that the province best government it can get; cannot afford in such a crisis to side issues. The province is by a grave danger, and all sho to remove Mr. Martin from instal in office men who would province good government al and solid lines. He held that should be free to select candid pective of the present politic He had always contended that in local affairs were a great Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper noticed, given expression to view. He could think of no the people could not on the pre sion unite, and turn from offic vidual whom Sir Hibbert T characterized as a political Zul as this meeting was concerne that it should be but the beginn movement of the anti-Mart throughout the province. He that Martin was a menace to t of the country, and that his adopted, would lead to comme aster.

At this point Edward B voted to the chair, and in a remarks outlined the scope a of the meeting in so far as he He had noticed advertisemen press, and these contained notification he had had of th or its objects. He had alw great interest in public affairs that every person had a per to discuss questions affecting welfare. Recognizing the condition in which the provi present, he urged agitation on of the people to put the best office. He did not know t any programme. At his invi following gentlemen then took the platform: Messrs. C. H W. Ridgway Wilson, Capt. C lipps-Wolley, Dr. Milne, S. P and Gordon Hunter. The then called upon Mr. Lugrin the meeting. Replying to addressed to him by Mr. asked his reasons for opposing tin, Mr. Lugrin said he did in condemning a man on his thought the people were oppo Martin, but Mr. Martin was only issue. Personally he w ler for constitutional govern believed in the principles of constitution, and he thought dians should stand up squar As far as the Lieutenant- actions were concerned, he demned them openly and was not a question of person been a personal friend of Governor McInnes and was s ly to him, but he still charge Governor had grossly violate tional practice in calling upo rin, and that was one of th which the people would ha on. Mr. Lugrin explained the origin of responsible g It had started through a gov favorites. He traced at s the history of its developmen down to local issues, he said the Governor after the defe Semlin ministry chose Mr. man without a following, jected by his former colleag lated a principle established work of centuries, and left B umbia to-day under person ment. It was time to stop thing. The entering wedge 1898, when Mr. Turner was That was the beginning of government in British Colun British Columbians saw it se posed to carry on the public the province without the a the people's representatives. lature would never have Martin supplies, and this p that individual should not chosen. (Applause.) Takin personnel of the governm were Martin, Yates and the two latter had never been fore in any public capacity. Yates was a man of the board, but that could scarcel political distinction. Mr. took up the matter of Mr. M form. There were 22 pla precious document, which co lot of rhetoric. There nothing in it, only two point serious consideration—the on