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THE PREMIER'S MANIFESTO.

An Open Letter to the Electors of British Columbia

In Which the Whole Policy of the Government is Reviewed.

To the Electors of British Columbia:

Gentlemen,—

Owing to my inability to personally address as many electors throughout the province as I had intended, or would have desired, I take this means of laying my views before you. At the end of another parliament and just before another election you are entitled to a personal account of the stewardship of those who have represented you for four years, more especially from myself as having been for the greater part of the time entrusted with the direction of affairs; and also to have a full and fair opportunity from the record that is before you of determining in whom you will repose confidence for another term.

A BRITISH COLUMBIA POLICY.

I and the government I represent are before you on the issues which have been created in the management of the affairs of the Province by us, and not upon issues which have arisen in Dominion politics. We are before you as British Columbians, and on the policy of British Columbia development. We

are to be judged on matters of administration, on questions of finance, on the manner in which justice has been administered, on things pertaining to mining, on our agricultural policy, on considerations of public works and railways, on the general influence for good of the legislation on the various interests represented in this country, on the progress which has been effected, and widely and comprehensively on the results which may fairly be claimed to have flown from our efforts.

A Standard of Comparison.

I do not claim that the present administration has been perfect. We are made up of men who are human, and with all the liability to err of which other men are possessed. We have striven to do that which appeared to us to be best calculated to benefit the Province in the progress of which we are all more or less largely interested. While we may not have done the best in all instances, we claim, nevertheless, to have done well by the electorate, and confident of the justness of our cause, we are before you for a renewal of the confidence

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which has been so generously extended to us in the past. If we have not wholly come up to your expectations, we ask you to carefully consider whether those who seek to take our places would have done better or as well. Examine proceedings of the Legislature for the past four years, and ask yourselves what policy they have expounded, that if carried into effect would have bettered your present conditions or advanced the interests of the province in a degree comparable with the progress that has already been made. It is a matter of comparison, a question of policy against policy, of men against men. These considerations I ask you to take home to yourselves seriously and by your decision we are willing to abide.

Introduction of Federal Issues.

There have been strong and persistent efforts made to divert the attention of the electors from the issues which have arisen in provincial affairs to those which are of a federal nature, and I know of no stronger evidence of the weakness of the cause of many who are in provincial matters opposed to the present administration than that they wished to introduce issues which are foreign to our home affairs, and to conduct the campaign on lines which would confuse the electorate and make this government a stalking horse for politicians at Ottawa. It was an evidence that they were not strong in legitimate opposition in provincial policy. Many of my supporters who were Conservatives, seeing the tendency towards the introduction of Dominion politics, were anxious to divide the lines accordingly, and urged such a course on the government. I took a decided stand in that I refused to sanction what I could not endorse. Others again on both sides suggested a coalition. The government said NO. That in perhaps a less objectionable form was a recognition of the same principle. I don't believe in mixing up Provincial and Dominion politics. We stand or fall within our own fortress.

Personal Position in Politics.

Personally, I need not tell you that I

am Conservative and was in my private capacity a supporter of the late administration at Ottawa. My political sentiments on that score were formed years ago, when owing to events familiar to most of us sentiment in this Province was consolidated on that side. If another course had been pursued at that time in regard to the policy affecting British Columbia, it might have been different with me and many others. Originally a free trader, I nevertheless endorsed the principle of protection in the National Policy and I believed from a practical standpoint, all things considered, and particularly in view of the attitude of the United States towards this country, it was in the interests of Canada. I think so still. But whether the Conservatives or Liberals were right, it was my right and privilege to vote on Dominion political issues as I pleased; but as a government, this government has been absolutely without prejudice or without party color. Since the present party at Ottawa has come into power, we have endeavored to act in the same friendly way and without a particle of prejudice, towards them, as we did towards their predecessors, and have tried in every way and on all occasions to cooperate as far as co-operation was possible in any and all matters affecting the mutual interests of the Province and the Dominion. I defy any person to lay finger on any action of ours in relation to the Dominion, which has not breathed of friendship and earnest desire on our part to meet the government at Ottawa half way. We have acted on the principle that there should be no distinction of politics in interests that are mutual, and party lines should never enter to interfere.

Strict Neutrality.

Therefore, I say, we are before you as British Columbians on a British Columbian policy. I might point to the disadvantages and the evils arising out of coalescing in politics with the Dominion; but I am not now dealing with that subject, except in so far as it is necessary to explain our position, which is and has been one of strictest neutrality.

A QUESTION OF COURTESY.

It may be held that in reference to the protection of the Columbia River at Revelstoke the attitude of the province was not one of friendliness; and while on that subject I may as well deal with the criticisms of the Opposition. It is stated that the government in this matter at first denied its responsibility in the premises, then admitted it, and again repudiated it. This is not the case. The government does not now and never did admit that that work is one which it should undertake, and although it HAS undertaken it as a MATTER OF LOCAL NECESSITY, I can assure you that this is not the last of it—that sooner or later, whatever party is in power at Ottawa, the broad question of the responsibility of the Dominion government in regard to the damage done by the action of navigable waters will have to be taken up and definitely settled, and then the Province will demand consideration and compensation for this work.

Revelstoke Protection Reviewed.

I do not intend to go over the whole subject again. The correspondence was laid before parliament and has been published, but so far from there being any discourtesy on our part or disposition to unfriendliness it was entirely the other way. The Dominion government placed the sum of \$10,900 in their 1896 estimates contingent upon the province voting a like sum. Whether the Dominion government was sincere or not in this I do not know, but not a word was said about it until a few days before the session of 1897, and personally I was wholly unaware of such a vote. This government was not consulted about it, and was not notified of it. If there was any discourtesy it was certainly not on our part. When the government was notified it took the position that the duty lay wholly with the Dominion government, the same as the protection of the Fraser river banks. If one was a Dominion matter, so was the other. We considered that to take this up in the way suggested was to assume a far-reaching responsibility, and coming on

us in the beginning of a trying session the government had not time to take it up seriously with the Dominion government. On this point I may say that no man in the House has talked so strongly on the treatment of this Province by the Dominion as the late member for Kootenay, Mr. Kellie, who in all things except the Columbia river at Revelstoke, made it one of his main political planks. In respect to that matter, because it affected his own support, he was willing to take the onus off the Dominion, and with that consistency for which his political career is noted is as strongly denouncing the Provincial government, because it refused to accept his view of the situation.

The Government's Position Explained.

Now, then, as to our position in this matter. The vote was not put on for that purpose in 1897. It may have been a mistake, or it may not, in view of the action the government subsequently took, but it was a matter considered not to be within our rights. However, in going up to Revelstoke last summer, I was strongly urged to take the matter up, and seeing for myself the loss to property that was likely to ensue, I wired and wrote to Ottawa urging the necessity of protection and offering as a matter of urgency to co-operate. The reply was "No vote," and I was reminded of our refusal to co-operate. I wrote and urged again, but without avail. I then sent up our own engineer to report for the purpose of getting an estimate. After receiving the report I wrote again in order that the Minister of Public Works might provide a sum in the estimate of the current year. Our representations were made in the most courteous manner, and with but one desire, and that to help the people of Revelstoke. Hon. Mr. Tarte, in a moment of spleen—and I absolve his colleagues from all blame,—wrote as discourteous and undignified a letter as was possible for one minister of the Crown to address to another, and in order to justify himself, testily represented it as a protest against this government throwing the responsibility of non-

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action on his department. In this he was wholly misleading. This government did not attempt to do anything of the kind. It is true we held that the Dominion government was responsible for the protection of the river bank, but not for the work not having gone on, which was another and different matter. I did point out, however, that in refusing NOW to co-operate with the province simply as a question of etiquette, the Minister would be responsible for any loss that might occur. I hold it to be the most childish, not to say culpable, thing of which a minister of the Crown could be guilty, when wholesale destruction of property was threatened, to hold back on a point of ethics. The estimate of the engineer for a complete job was \$45,000; but in view of the great and imminent danger to the province, we took it in hand and did a portion sufficient for protection, at its own cost. The work was performed expeditiously and well, and I am glad it has been successful in withstanding the high water.

For the Electors to Decide.

This was the only conflict or irritation of any kind that has occurred between the two governments, and as to the nature of the discourtesy in this case, and the responsibility for it which is alleged, I leave you, the electorate, to judge. I have referred to the relations of the Provincial and Dominion government as at present constituted to show you that our efforts and our desire have been to foster goodwill and to advance co-operation in matters of mutual interest and benefit, so far as by any acts of it was possible to achieve that end.

BETTER TERMS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA.

This leads me to the consideration of our relations with the Dominion in a general and constitutional way, and into which the question of partizan politics does and should not enter; but nevertheless of very great moment. It is not a question of one administration or the other being in power at Ottawa. It is a question affecting the whole future of British Columbia and her rights as a pro-

vince. At the time of Confederation the representatives of British Columbia made a good bargain so far as they could see then, but they could not possibly foresee how every detail would work out. The Dominion fulfilled its part of the arrangement, perhaps not to the letter, but so far as the essence of the contract is concerned. I find no fault with that, nor do I wish now to act the part of agitator or fomentor of unrest or dissatisfaction; however, under new conditions and in the light of new developments we see that this province is paying more than its share, is contributing in a greater degree than it receives annually, after allowing for all reasonable charges for cost of government and general expenses.

The Railway Situation.

I wish to refer more particularly to the railway situation, which is involved with this subject. There is concurrent jurisdiction in railway matters between the Province and the Dominion, and as the railway problem is coming to, and will soon, be THE problem of politics in this Province, I foresee conflict. In addition to that there should be a well defined ratio of support or assistance to railways, which we all admit, are of the most vital importance to this country. The government in its railway policy of last session endeavored to establish a ratio of two to one as between the Dominion and this Province. But that may not be a correct ratio. In my opinion it is far too low, considering all the benefits the Dominion derives from railway construction in this Province, particularly in the matter of customs revenue. If the Province had control of its own customs revenue, it could build its own railways without outside assistance on any railway policy it might choose to adopt, because there has been recently an excess of nearly one million dollars annually over what is received back in the form of expenditure from the Dominion. You will plainly see how our interests are affected by such an arrangement. More than that, the government of this Province in the matter of assisting railways is practical-

ly at the mercy of the Dominion as to what companies it may contract with, because if the Dominion Government gives it support to a company or any particular scheme, the Province is practically bound to recognize its choice or do without railways. As none or few of the important enterprises can be financed without Federal aid, it is self evident that the two governments must agree, or, in other words, if we want railways, we must accept their choice; and so in the past all engineering of railway charters and railway deals has been carried on with a view to the support of both governments. This is inevitable, and must continue to be so under present conditions. The possibility of conflict, however, is always imminent; and while the Province has certain inherent rights of eminent domain, it is uncertain how far the right of the Dominion extends in respect to charters granted under its authority. This is a grave question, and must be settled. Moreover, the Dominion has, under the British North America Act superior jurisdiction and can declare any railway to be for the benefit of Canada, and assume control, even though it had been built largely by provincial aid.

Government Railways.

See how this affects the question of government ownership, not to speak of moral and real property rights. I am not opposed as a matter of theory or principle to government ownership of railways. I can see how, under proper management and under certain conditions, it is possible and might even be beneficial. I only regard the suggestion as impracticable under our present conditions and present relations with the Dominion. If we assume that sentiment some day may be consolidated in favor of government as against private ownership, who would build and own them? It would either have to be the Province or the Dominion. Both could not control them, unless by **SOME NEW AND MUTUAL ARRANGEMENT**. The government that owned the great inter-provincial lines would also have to own and control the

small lines and feeders as well. Nowadays, when the interchange of traffic is essential to all railways on a large or small scale, the independence of small lines on a paying basis is out of the question—is impracticable. We have an instance in the Island of Vancouver in the Victoria and Sidney Railway, which without any connection to afford it more than local traffic can never be made to pay, and will continue to be a burden to the province. Therefore, I say, government ownership, in provinces, can never be brought within the pale of practical politics.

A Demand Will be Made.

It is necessary, therefore, in view of the foregoing considerations, which I submit are cogent and important, to take another step, and to approach the Dominion Government, in no support of of unfriendliness or antagonism, and ask for a revision of the terms of Confederation, particularly in the matter of railways, or railway jurisdiction, and generally to review our interfinancial relations. It is proposed that delegates or representatives of this government shall go to Ottawa at an early day, and submit to the authorities there some of these considerations and perhaps others as well. We shall make railways the basis of negotiations. What we want, if not a revision, is an understanding which shall form a compact, written and binding, that our requirements and rights shall be clearly defined and recognized. We want better terms, we want fairer terms. Nova Scotia when it found that the bargain it had entered into and was bound by, failed to fulfil its expectations and necessities, went to Ottawa, laid its case before the government, and obtained redress. So far from that action disturbing the safety of Confederation this recognition laid the foundation on a firmer and more enduring basis. Manitoba has just come in for additional recognition; and British Columbia's plea is one of justice and right and must ultimately prevail. There is a misconception in the east as to the position of British Columbia and its relations

to the Dominion, but the people of Eastern Canada only require to have the case presented to them fairly and fully to understand and acquiesce.

OUR POLICY OF PUBLIC WORKS.

And this naturally leads me to the consideration of our own Provincial policy of public works and railway development. This, I may say, associated with the question of finance with which I will deal presently, is the pith and kernel of our appeal to you, and the subject which above all others requires attention. I am prepared to meet fairly and squarely the Opposition critics in all matters connected with our policy in this respect. There are side issues and trivial objections, which our opponents will maintain and which they hold up to the eyes of the electorate to confuse the mind and obscure the wider and more important questions of public policy. With these political particles in an atmosphere of dust I cannot deal in a letter outlining and reviewing the scope of Government acts extending over a term of years, except to say that taken individually and in the aggregate, they fairly represent the measure of the men who are conducting the Opposition fight and a fitting employment for their peculiar talents for microscopical investigation. By their methods of scientific enquiry the microbes, which we are told exist in myriads in nature, in us and all around us, are made to look like elephants and other giant creatures, and if they could only induce the electors to look through their little glasses, they would frighten them all into hysterics. There are others of them with telescopes sweeping the political heavens for stray comets and dead worlds, which threaten to fall down and knock us into smithereens. I ask you like sensible men to take a common sense and every day business view of political matters in British Columbia, and I am quite confident that you will neither be disturbed nor alarmed.

One of Development.

I have dealt in my speeches on the

floor of the House with the public works of this province and our policy in relation thereto. It has been one of development. In ten years we have spent, independent of railway aid, some five millions of money in roads, bridges, wharves, public buildings, hospitals, charities, education, and the like. At the end of the coming fiscal year, we will have spent over six millions. This does not include the cost of the parliament buildings. These things are necessary. They are what the people want and demand. You might as well try to develop this province without spending money to open it up in a variety of ways, as for a farmer to make a farm pay without first clearing, fencing it, erecting buildings, etc. We have here a province, 400,000 square miles in extent, rugged in its exterior, and divided into geographical sections which must be connected by lines of communication, administered, educated, protected, populated. It means that in order that its resources may be made available and its possibilities realized, we must spend large sums of money, here, there and everywhere. We must first provide the facilities of intercourse and means of doing business before business can be done. That fact in a word explains our policy of public works and our financial position at the same time. We cannot sit down and wait, Micawber-like, for something to turn up before we act. We must act that things may turn up. We must be missionaries as well as administrators; we must be pioneers for the pioneer. In every district we are met with demands. Our opponents who cry against the debt incurred to meet these requirements, in each district complain that money enough has not been spent. Every Opposition candidate strives to make you believe that the government is extravagant in every other constituency but his own and in that he assures you, if elected, no want would go unsupplied, and that every grievance would be adjusted at any cost. If, however, they came to power with a general policy of laissez faire, of curtailment of expenditure, of doing with-

out public works rather than borrow, and put it in force, you would soon realize how grievously you had been deceived, and what false friends and false prophets they had been.

Not Time to Stop Yet.

Of course, a time must come when borrowing should cease, but that time has not arrived yet. When the country is well opened with railways as a farm is with drains, when main roads have been completed in the important settlements, when mining is developed, when, in short, the effect of expenditure is being felt in new sources of, and expanding revenue, then the income will meet our expenditure, but until then it would be folly to stop half-way and lose the benefits of what had already been done by leaving it uncompleted.

Influence on Revenue in Kootenay.

I will refer presently to the government railway policy, but I wish to point to Kootenay to show the influence of a liberal expenditure on revenue, and we may reasonably anticipate that as Kootenay is only one of the many rich mining districts in the province capable of similar results, the same beneficial effect will be general. During ten years the government has spent (apart from railways) in round numbers \$600,000 in public works, roads and trails, hospitals, etc., in Kootenay, East and West. In addition to that the following railways have been assisted liberally: Columbia and Kootenay, Nakusp and Slocan, Kaslo and Slocan, the Nelson and Fort Sheppard, the B. C. Southern, the Columbia and Western. Mark now the advance in revenue as shown in the following taken from the public accounts.

1888.....	\$ 26,425 08
1889.....	22,995 94
1890.....	48,995 94
1891.....	43,986 88
1892.....	67,465 49
1893.....	91,050 97
1894.....	67,923 64
1895.....	82,106 58
1896.....	140,842 28 ¹
1897.....	348,804 03
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	\$939,540 71

I need say no more to point to the wisdom of the course pursued and the possibility of an equilibrium being soon established between revenue and expenditure.

A Clean Record.

Some complaint has been made about the way we have expended the money in the various districts. It is stated that we have wasted it, etc. Such a statement is extraordinary from the fact that in ten years, after scrupulous and exacting criticism, the Opposition has failed to point to one important instance in which this has been established.

Five million dollars is a lot of money to spend publicly and there are many districts in which to expend it and a wide extent of country covered and a variety of conditions to be taken into consideration. It is strange that in all that time the records of the House do not show a single investigation or a proof establishing these statements. It is true, there have been many vague assertions, but a specific charge has never been laid, or a specific wrong alleged. I defy the Opposition to come forward and show it. Can any government in Canada point to a cleaner record? Surely in the face of this the Opposition to the government should blush to repeat what they have never had the courage to make good on the floor of the House.

How the Money is Spent.

With reference to the manner of expending road money, I will just say that it is and always has been the policy of the government to expend it in the district by day labor, employing as far as possible the people of the district, who are thus enabled to reap the advantage doubly. It has worked out well, and I see no reason to change it. We have improved the system, however, to this extent, by appointing an engineer of Public Works throughout the Province under whose supervision the whole will be carried on. The Government has been fortunate in securing for this purpose, a gentleman whose abilities as well as his experience for a number of years as resident engineer for the Dominion Govern-

ment have eminently qualified him for that duty. Of course, those in charge of works have sometimes made mistakes and those who are employed as contractors and otherwise sometimes try to get ahead of the government but as a rule I think our Public Works are efficiently and honestly carried out; and such have been the aim and effort of the Lands and Works Department, which though much abused, because it is the great spending department of the Province, is open to the most rigid scrutiny both as to its officials and its methods.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RAILWAY POLICY.

The next thing for consideration in connection with public works is the railway policy of the government. Railways are the great essentials to development in all new countries, and this is particularly true of British Columbia. It has always been recognized by everybody, to have success, to make and build up a Province out of materials we have so abundantly, we must have railways. The question has been how to get them. When we started out the government of the day adopted what had been the policy of other provinces and of the Dominion of Canada to subsidize by land grants. It was the only way we could assist. Our credit had not been established in the money markets. We could not give money, we had plenty of land, so we had to give land. In this way the E. & N. Railway was built, and to this policy is due the inauguration of the splendid railway facilities with which Kootenay is now provided—the Columbia & Western, the Kaslo & Slocan, the Columbia & Kootenay, the Nelson & Fort Sheppard and the B. C. Southern. Although the government had recognized a policy of guarantee of interest, a departure was made on the building of the Nakusp & Slocan. This was the second stage in the development of policy. The land system was good when there was no better, but is open to objections, and although the land grants so far alienated by railways contain no large extent of arable or pastoral lands a growing

sentiment is opposed to that system, a fact which the government recognized when it took the second step referred to. But as stated in my speech on the Public Works Loan Act, the system necessarily implies an indefiniteness and uncertainty as to the amount for which the Province becomes liable; and with the experience we have already had we decided to adopt last year the policy of giving a direct and stated amount per mile, by which an exact and known liability is assumed. This policy assumes two things, which are admittedly true in our present circumstances: (1) That it is necessary to assist railways in order that they may be built, and (2) that assistance is beneficial and results in a direct benefit and gives an indirect and adequate return in the increase of the revenue. This year we made a step further as illustrated in the Coast-Teslin railway, and stipulated for a share of the proceeds. To some extent, however, the merits of every railway proposition must be considered individually. You cannot in a country like British Columbia apply a hard and fast principle inasmuch as a different set of conditions surround and affect each proposition. Those who imagine that some ideal railway policy can be evolved which will cause railways to be built spontaneously and without cost to the Province would find that the problem is a gigantic one, and not quite removed from the sphere of miracles. Railways cost money, especially in a country sparse in population and prolific in mountain ranges. Capital is stubborn and hard-headed, and when you come to deal with it your theorists find that theory is one thing and practical railway building is another. You must adapt your policy to your conditions, your financial capabilities and the requirements of the investing public. Experience is the best teacher, and we have proceeded on the lines which experience has dictated, profiting in each advance by what has gone before. In the meantime construction has gone on and has been even rapid. Our efforts have been successful in accomplishing what we set

out to perform, and the length of railways already constructed, and in course of construction, and of lines reasonably in prospect and provided for, is over 1,600 miles. This is a record of practically ten years. It is one to which we can point with some pride, and will be a factor of the future development of the province, the potentiality of which neither you nor I can well estimate at the present time. I have previously pointed to the remarkable way in which railway construction has benefited the Kootenays, and the influence it has directly brought to bear on the revenues arising out of those districts.

A Completing Link.

We have already provided an arterial system for British Columbia, which when completed, will render the further assistance to railways unnecessary as the sources of traffic will have been provided so as to make further railway building self-sustaining. In the south railway facilities are being liberally provided and when the B. C. Southern and the East Kootenay roads are completed, the business arising out of the great development there will be of immense volume. On the north the line from the coast to Teslin Lake, and the Cassiar Central, which is now getting under way, will, when opened for traffic, ensure another large volume of traffic there. We have then the completing link, from south to north through an immensely fertile plateau, to construct. With the traffic already in existence and the tributary lines from the coast at the south, centre and north, that will be an undertaking easy of accomplishment, and one that capitalists will take hold of voluntarily as affording a substantial profit and immense returns.

PROVINCIAL FINANCE.

Closely associated with the subject of public works and railway development is that of finance. In 1887, when I had the honour of being called to the Cabinet as Minister of Finance, I began to enquire into and consider seriously the advisability of re-organizing the system of obtaining loans. At that time, as you are

aware, the money required to be borrowed from time to time was obtained by individual loans on conditions similar to those upon which municipalities and corporations issue their debentures, each loan being issued without reference to any system or to any previous loans. As the result of my enquiries, and acting upon the best financial advice of financiers in London, an Act was passed authorizing the issue of 3 per cent. inscribed stock. This action of the government was very much criticised and the government was severely blamed for two things: First, for not issuing stock at par; and secondly, for paying a certain amount as premium for the purpose of securing the conversion of loans already in existence, carrying a higher rate of interest. I have already on numerous occasions in my Budget Speeches in the Legislature, and in addressing the electors fully explained the advantages arising out of this financial policy, which was really borrowed from Great Britain herself, the example having been set by the great Chancellor of the Exchequer Mr. Goschen. In Great Britain no one questions the wisdom of such a policy, because the public men of that country understand and appreciate its importance. In British Columbia it was generally accepted with satisfaction at the time, and I do not know that any person since that time has put forth any valid reasons why we should return to the old system, or why, in fact, we should not have adopted the present one; but there have been certain of our opponents whose assumed knowledge of finance has warranted them in raising the objections referred to.

Practical Benefits Derived.

The result of adopting the policy of issuing inscribed stock and of conversion, predicted by myself when it was decided upon, has been fully realized. What was then maintained was that the Province would reap a very great permanent benefit by having its stock listed in the money markets of the world in establishing its credit on a permanent basis, and lowering the general rate of interest. It was recognized then that in

order to carry out the great enterprises which the development of the Province would render imperative, it would be necessary from time to time to go to the money markets to raise large sums of money for this purpose, which, from that time forward could be obtained on much more favorable terms. The loan of 1891 was issued at 86, or a discount of 14 per cent. This at the time when the province had practically no credit and was little known outside of the Dominion of Canada, was the best that could be done, and was at that time considered a most successful loan. In 1893 debentures were issued at 91, and in 1895 the \$2,000,000 loan was floated at 95. Thus we see that notwithstanding the debt had been materially increased in that time, the credit of the Province had gone steadily up, and that the rate of discount had been correspondingly reduced; or in other words, while the discount on the first loan issued on the inscribed stock principle was 14 per cent. and the net rate of interest was 3 5-8 per cent. in 1895 the rate of discount had fallen to 5 per cent., and the net rate of interest to 3 1-10 per cent., and the cost of floating the loan in the latter instance was 3 3-10 per cent., which included all charge in connection therewith, including those of underwriting.

Conversion of Old Loans.

As to the cost of conversion, this was rendered advisable from financial considerations, from the fact that the larger the amount of inscribed stock that could be placed upon the market, the more favourably would investors regard it, and in this way it was possible to place a sufficient sum on the market to render the operation a success. In order to deal in the money markets of the world it must be understood that there are certain conditions governing investments, and the larger the sum to be placed is the easier it is to finance, provided always, of course, the security is good. You all know that in London, or in any of the other large money centres, only large propositions are entertained, and the larger the amount of stock that can be placed on the market

at once the better are its chances for success. For instance, if you go to London and endeavor to float a company, the capital of which is only \$50,000 or \$100,000 the chances are, no matter how good, intrinsically the scheme may be, you would only be laughed at for your pains, while one requiring from 250,000 pounds to 1,000,000 pounds would be seriously considered, if not taken up. The conditions which affect government loans are precisely similar, and it is for this reason, and upon the advice of the best financial men in London that the scheme of conversion was undertaken. It was successful in achieving the object we had in view, and when we had attained that conversion ceased and the balance of the old loans will be allowed to mature.

Credit Firmly Established.

I have already, I think, as on previous occasions, clearly indicated the advantages to the Province through inscribed stock and the conversion of the debt, and our best informed critics are forced to admit that the policy is a sound one, but affect to question some of the details. The financial credit of the province has been placed on a sound and permanent basis, and as already been shown has steadily advanced since 1891, each succeeding loan being placed on more advantageous terms. At the present time the British Columbia securities are quoted at from 103 to 104, indicating a great degree of confidence on the part of investors, and ranking our 3 per cent. inscribed stock with the best Colonial securities. This I contend is a most creditable position for British Columbia to occupy and is one which would not be possible had it not been that our financial policy had been reorganized. We can go on from this out and borrow all the money we require for purposes of development at a large annual saving to the Province, and if this government had done nothing more to warrant the support of the electorate I submit that this result would have been sufficient to entitle it to most favorable consideration at the hands of the electorate.

The New Loan.

With reference to the new loan to the amount of \$5,000,000, which the government has obtained authority to issue, I may say that this large sum will not be all required at once, but only as the works to which it is intended to apply are undertaken and proceeded with. It is satisfactory to know, too, that the prospects of new loans to that amount, if required, are excellent. I have already had a number of enquiries for a prospectus from men representing large financial firms, so that we may reasonably expect that the amount placed on the market will be taken up several times over.

Revenue and Expenditure.

A word as to the condition of the finances in respect to revenue and expenditure. The Opposition speak about the "deficits" of the government, and the impression is sought to be left on your minds that the ordinary revenue is not equal to the ordinary expenditure. This is wholly erroneous. The excess of expenditure over revenue is not of the nature of a deficit as that term is ordinarily applied. Let me explain. If a farmer's receipts from the ordinary operations of his farm are not equal to his ordinary expenses in the way of ploughing, sowing, reaping, etc., he is going behind. He has a "deficit," but if in the course of the improvements and development of his farm in order to make it capable of the best results he expends a lot of money on reproductive work such as draining, fencing and building, for which he borrows money, and this extends over a period of years, all the while paying interest, he is not necessarily losing money. If, on the other hand, though going into debt annually for some time, his receipts are yearly growing larger and are greater than his ordinary expenditure, outside of improvements, he is really making money, and has each year a corresponding surplus. Now, this is exactly the position of the Province. It is spending annually large sums of money in opening up the country, in roads, trails, bridges, school houses, public buildings, assisting rail-

ways and so on, which things are necessary and expedient and are reproductive. A new country is like a new farm—it requires improving before it can be made to pay. Its revenue is steadily increasing. In 1877 it was \$408,000, in 1887 \$608,000 and in 1897 it was \$1,383,000. Our expenditure has increased in about the same proportion, but in that time we have spent large sums for public works, which for the last ten years has been about \$3,500,000, not including the cost of the parliament buildings or railways. As a matter of fact, our ordinary revenue exceeds our ordinary expenditure, which the following statement shows:

Revenue, 1896-97	\$1,383,048
Revenue, 1886-87	540,398
Increase, 253 per cent.	\$ 842,650
Expenditure, 1896-97	\$1,569,071
Public Works	519,164
Expenditure less public works	\$1,049,907
Revenue	1,049,907

Balance excess of expenditure. \$ 333,141
 Allowing \$200,000 as ordinary expenditure on public works, it would leave a surplus of \$133,141 of revenue over expenditure for 1896-97.

The Influence of Mining.

I have already pointed to the influence of public works and railways in affecting the revenue from Kootenay district, which in the last two years alone contributed nearly half a million dollars. In all the mining districts similar results will follow. Kootenay so far is practically the only producing district, but in Boundary and throughout Yale, in Lillooet, in Cariboo, in Harrison Lake district, in Vancouver Island, up the Coast, and in Omineca and Cassiar extensive development is going on and in each of these there is every reason to believe there will be results comparable with what we have in Kootenay to-day. The effect on the revenue, if at all comparable, and we have no reason to assume it will not be, must in the aggregate place the finances of the province in an eminently satisfactory condition before long. We are simply adopting the old-

fashioned fisherman's policy of throwing a sprat to catch a mackerel.

Additional Sources of Revenue.

We must not forget, however, that population and development bring with them enlarged responsibilities, increased expenditure. Are there any increased sources of revenue provided? I have been speaking so far of the revenues which ordinary arise. In the increase of population we have what is known as the head-tax, or "revenue tax." We may assume that by the next census taking the population will have increased to 250,000, or an increase of 150,000 in ten years. That means at least \$100,000 more under the above head per annum than in 1891. This annually increases with population. We have also the allowance from the Dominion of 80c per head, which is another \$100,000 per annum after 1901. The mineral tax will be \$50,000 more per annum at least by that time.

In addition to all this, however, the government has had in view new sources of revenue of an important character. It has not been unmindful of the fact that the extraordinary development required within the next few years to give a proper impetus to mining and other industries involves an increase of liability which it is necessary to provide for so as to preserve the equilibrium between revenue and expenditure and a reserve fund for the redemption of the debt without drawing too largely on current revenues year by year, sufficient at least to pay the sinking fund. I have had under consideration and I hope to be able to lay before the next Legislature, if I am spared as Finance Minister, a measure with this in view, and that without increasing the present ordinary rates of taxation by one cent. I say I hope to be able to do this. We cannot do everything at once, and my time was too much occupied to perfect the measure in all its details to submit it at the last session; besides the many other important matters occupying the attention of the government precluded giving the time necessary to one which will demand very grave consideration, being

as it would to some degree at least a new departure, and to some extent a re-organization of the present system. I mention this here, not as an issue in the campaign or necessarily an additional reason for the return of the government. I cannot now ask you to elect me on a policy, the principle of which is unknown to you, but to show you that the government is fully alive to its responsibilities and the considerations which affect the future financial policy of the country are not being lost sight of.

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Another matter may be here referred to. Attacks have been made on the civil service, not so much as to the system regulating it, as to the number employed in the service and the manner in which they perform their work. The civil service, I may say, is always considered a fair target. An Opposition invariably finds fault with it. In the absence of anything else or in addition to all other things, it is always in order to abuse it. I may say here that in the absence of any specific charges of incompetency or malfeasance or without knowledge really of the duties to be performed, this is a very cowardly and unjust course to pursue, because necessarily the members of the service are unable to defend themselves, and are debarred from "talking back." They can only be defended in the House, where care is taken not to make the charges, by members of the government responsible for their conduct. Now, the civil service is a body of men, like all other bodies of men, made up of individuals varying in character and in degree of qualifications. Some are better than others or not so good as others, if you prefer it that way. Taking the average, however, and I have a personal knowledge of most of them, I think the civil service of British Columbia compares favorably with that of any other civil service, man for man, in industry, efficiency and general character. I know of no one at Victoria who is not fully employed and with whose services, consistent with requirements of the service, we could dispense without at

least replacing him. The work is constantly increasing in all departments, and we are always, if anything, a little behind instead of ahead of the requirements in that respect. In the whole service in British Columbia, I do not believe that we could dispense with half a dozen men out of the several hundred without as I say, replacing them. I am pleased to bear testimony to their general efficiency, courtesy and good work. The only reasonable criticism is one that has not occurred to the Opposition, and that is to my mind the lack of a system of gradation and regular promotion, which is now beginning to be felt owing to the increase of numbers. Several years ago the government had decided on a measure of this kind, combined with a plan of insurance, but it was found difficult in so limited a service as it then was to apply a general and rigid system, and especially to the outside service, the largest by far, in which the conditions and requirements differ so materially in different districts; and the matter was allowed to drop; but in a very short time, if, indeed the time is not already ripe for it, it will require to be considered again.

THE REDISTRIBUTION ACT.

Coming now to the question of redistribution, although we heard a great deal about it in the House, when the fighting men of the Opposition were playing heroes to the "gods," we do not hear so much about it at present. The strange feature about it is that the redistribution measure of 1894, which was so roundly abused at the time, was strongly eulogized by the Opposition in 1898. Now, practically speaking, the redistribution Act of 1898 in no way material alters the principles laid down in that of 1894, which has been declared by the Opposition in the House to be a just and equitable measure. Practically, the same conditions exist now as did then, and no material revision was necessary. Kootenay in the meantime had grown to be an important and populous district and it was proper that it should have increased representation.

Three new members were added. Vancouver had grown to be on a parity with Victoria and was given an additional member accordingly. The only other place in which conditions had altered was Cassiar. Last year and this, owing to the Yukon excitement, attention has been suddenly attracted to that vast district, which is 165,000 square miles in extent, and which has a great variety of rich resources. Although from the distance from the centre of administration it is difficult, if not impossible, to get the names of voters there, there are nevertheless several thousand people scattered throughout its extent, and with two important railways to be undertaken it is almost certain that thousands more will be there before long. In addition to these thousands of returning Yukon miners will spread over it and important interests will be represented and new industries started. Under such circumstances it is eminently proper and in fact essential that such a district should be well represented. The present voting population, by reason of the special conditions existing there, by no means represent what is there and infinitely less than what will be there in a year or two. To apply a rule of representation on a mathematical basis of voting power to an exceptional district like Cassiar is absurd.

Principles and Precedents.

Outside of the three ridings referred to, the basis of representation was settled in 1894 and the change in conditions or population did not justify any change. I cannot do better here than quote what was stated by the late Chief Justice, then Premier, during the campaign of 1894, with reference to the redistribution measure of that year and to my mind it is the clearest statement of the principles we have had. It is simply an impossibility in this province to apply any principles of representation on a mathematical basis of population. Mr. Davie said:

"One thing that the Redistribution Bill provides for is the equitable division of representation as between the Mainland and Island. Talk as we like about the

matter of sectionalism involved, that is really the kernel of the whole problem, and any arrangement that did not accomplish that would fail to be satisfactory. We all know, everybody knows who is at all familiar with the politics of British Columbia, that the demand for a Redistribution Bill arose out of conditions of inequality in this respect as the result of development in recent years which threw the preponderance of population on the Mainland. The agitation of the Mainland Association and all the agitation of the past five or six years has been on those lines. Mr. Brown proposes to make the Cascades the dividing line, but what is and has always been regarded as the natural dividing line is the Gulf of Georgia. The two large and distinct sections of the province, geographical and political, are the Mainland and the Island. Politically this division had its root in the early history of the province, or rather of the provinces, because Vancouver Island and British Columbia were originally separate Crown Colonies, and this distinction has been continued more or less. It is conditions that actually exist that we must face, not those which might be. Speaking in round numbers the white population of the Island and Mainland, according to the census, are respectively 27,500 and 37,500. Comparatively speaking, the same relative conditions exist in both. Therefore, an exact proportion of representation on that basis is the fairest settlement of a question into which sectional feeling has undoubtedly entered to a very large extent, one which has, in fact, been constituted thereby. It settles a long standing grievance, but no sooner was a bill brought down satisfying the conditions of equality than the government was charged with sectionalism, as though the better way, the just way, to obliterate sectionalism altogether, were not to remove the cause. In doing this the Island has given up two members, the Mainland has gained two. The real grievance of Mr. Brown now is that he has no longer reason to kick. He has lost his only plank and is floundering in the sea.

Precedent in Confederation.

"Some fault has been found because Esquimalt still retains two members. * * * There is a principle obtaining here which has been observed in redistribution measures in Canada and in England, and which applies to several constituencies both on the Island and on the Mainland. It has had general recognition throughout the Empire in matters of representation.

"At the time of Confederation in Canada, so serious a matter as representation had, it is needless to say, careful consideration, and the principle to which we refer was recognized to such a degree as to be embodied in the Articles, which we quote as follows:

"(4.) On any such re-adjustment the number of members for a province shall not be reduced unless the proportion which the number of the population of the province bear to the number of the aggregate population of Canada at the then last preceding readjustment of the number of members for the province is ascertained at the latest census to be diminished by one-twentieth part or upwards."

"(4) Such readjustment shall not take effect until the termination of the then existing parliament."

"(52.) The number of members of the House of Commons may be from time to time increased by the parliament of Canada, provided the proportionate representation of the provinces prescribed by this Act is not thereby disturbed."

Recognized Throughout the Empire.

"It is almost a maxim of government that the right of franchise once granted to an individual should never be taken away except for extraordinary reasons. What is true of the unit is true of the community. In other words, representation in a sense becomes a vested right, which is only interfered with or lessened by reason of materially altered circumstances. As we have shown, representation in Canada is only permitted to be restricted, when a material reduction in population takes place, such as we see illustrated in the case of Cariboo. Que-

bec province, so jealous was it of its ancient rights and privileges, stipulated for a fixed representation, one that could not be altered, and the Fathers of Confederation, recognizing the safe principle we have adverted to, adopted it, and Quebec, the oldest and primordial unit of Canada, became the standard upon which the representation of the other and newer provinces was based. If we go to Great Britain we find that principle has been respected. Speaking generally the British constitution wherever in force, though liberal in the enlargement of representation, regards privileges once granted as sacred and rightly so, because the stability of the constitution is due to constant and uniform application of stable principles. Any changes that are made are effected with great caution and only when circumstances and conditions have so altered as to render it imperative in the public interests. As a consequence, we find both in Canada as a whole and in Great Britain disparities in representation, much greater than exist or will exist under the new measure of representation in British Columbia, notwithstanding that population is more uniform and conditions less diverse than here."

OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

One or two things more and I think I will have dealt with the main objections to the government policy. I say "main" objections, because it is practically impossible within reasonable limits to deal with all the Opposition has to say, much relating to mere matters of detail. Nothing with these gentlemen is right. By no possibility, could this government, according to their peculiar views, have done anything, even by accident, which was not absolutely bad.

Connection With Companies.

I have been abused most virulently and persistently for my connection with one or two English companies organized for the development of the Yukon trade and mining in this province. It has been openly stated that I accepted a seat on the directorate for the purpose of using my position and my

influence to assist them—of even taking advantage of secret knowledge which I possessed as a member of the Executive to further their interests and my own. I cannot deal with this matter as I would like to, owing to it being before the courts, having taken a course to which I was compelled to place my defamers where they would be compelled either to prove their statements or stand before the public in their true light. In the meantime I can only say that I have lived long enough in British Columbia and am sufficiently well known in private and public life to abide in confidence the result of that action and the verdict of the people of the Province as to whether I have prostituted or am capable of prostituting a public trust for private and mercenary purposes. In taking the position I did so, not without enquiry as to the personnel and objects of the companies and as a right to which my public office was no bar, or with which it was not inconsistent or incompatible. If my name was in any way improperly used it was without my knowledge or authority. The Opposition press has quoted with great eagerness extracts from English papers on the subject, which they are still parading as campaign literature. I just submit for their consideration an extract from the proceedings of the Imperial parliament, taken from the London Daily Times:

"Mr. Field (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether he would grant a return of the members of the House who were directors of one or more public companies.

"Mr. Balfour—I do not think anything would be gained by such a return.

"Mr. MacNeill (Donegal, S.) asked the right hon. gentleman whether he was aware that 23 ministers divided 47 directorates amongst them.

"Mr. Balfour—No, I am not aware of that."

I had not intended during the time that this matter was before the courts to have referred to it, but the indecency with which the Opposition disregarded the law in this respect compels me to refer to it."

The Mortgage Tax.

Another matter that has been persistently kept before the electors is the mortgage tax, and upon this question the Opposition is appealing for support on account of its proposal to abolish the tax on mortgages, altogether. There is anything between \$15,000,000 and \$25,000,000 invested in mortgages in this Province, which under this proposal, would escape taxation entirely, and the Province would lose \$60,000 in revenue. There is a great deal of confusion in the minds of many persons regarding the nature of the tax on mortgages. There is in the assessment act specifically no tax on mortgages. A mortgage is simply one form of personal property and as such is liable to be assessed. In all the provinces, in all the states of the Union, and in Great Britain this rule obtains. Mortgages are nowhere exempt. They constitute a form of capital that should above all others be made to pay, because it is not productive and earns a safe dividend. It is not, therefore, a question of whether mortgages should pay taxes or not, because there can be no question as to that; but as to how the government should proceed in order that the man upon whom the tax is levied and who, it is the intention of the Act, should pay and not the borrower. No other subject has had more serious consideration than this at the hands of the government, which recognizes that in many cases it leads to a hardship. For the purpose of obtaining all the possible data on the subject and a report that may lead to a solution of the incidence of taxation falling on the wrong shoulders—though, of course, no one borrowing money can be made to pay it without first agreeing voluntarily to do so—has been referred among other matters to a commission, as the result of which, judging from its personnel, I think you will agree with me in saying there ought to be much light thrown on the whole matter and a useful report received.

Alien Labor.

Alien labor is another question, which

has come prominently to the front. The government, though it sympathizes with the sentiment in favor of retaining the home market for home and white labor, regards this, owing to the constitutional considerations involved, as an open question. The government believes in all public works, so far as possible being carried on by our citizens, and in all government works of whatever character the government recognizes and acts on that belief. The whole subject of employing Chinese underground in coal mines is before the courts and we expect an authoritative decision before long from the highest court in the realm to which it has been referred. The alien law of 1897 was passed with the consent and the assistance of the government, but the Lieutenant-Governor saw fit on his own responsibility to withhold his sanction before it was referred to His Excellency at Ottawa for review. From the reply received from the Minister of the Justice at Ottawa it will be seen that the Dominion refuses to take the responsibility of declaring it valid, and there are, therefore, grave doubts as to its constitutionality. If it were a question alone affecting the Chinese the difficulty would not be so great, although the whole subject is one for judicial reference, but in dealing with the Japanese it is dealing with a nation that is recognized as civilized and whatever may be our provincial interests or our individual sympathies or views we are not permitted to infringe on treaty rights that the Imperial Government is bound to respect and maintain. I trust that the constitutional limitations of the Provincial legislature will shortly be strictly defined, and that the whole subject may be cleared up. Of this you may be assured that so far as in the power of the province lies the rights and interests of labor will be upheld. Upon that score the legislative enactments on our statute-books will compare favorably with those of any other province or part of the Dominion or Empire. There is absolute equality established under the law and every right and interest are fully protected.

Miners' Licenses.

The question of miners' licenses is another that has had the very serious consideration of the government. It is, understand, as in the case of the mortgage tax, one which has always been in existence in British Columbia, and for which this government is not in any way responsible, as you would be led to believe. This government has simply not altered the law, that is all. It was announced some time ago that this tax on working miners in metalliferous mines would be taken off, but a great deal of opposition was raised, on the ground that the majority of the miners in the new districts, many of whom, by the way, are prospectors and claim owners as well, are not British subjects, and while earning a livelihood and having all the advantages of citizenship, would contribute practically nothing to the revenues of the country. This is something the force of which cannot be denied. I am willing to admit the justice of there being no distinction among working miners of any class, and the government is disposed to place all on equal footing as soon as it can see its way clear to do so. The government will endeavor to so adjust the matter, keeping in mind the objection which has already been referred to, as to meet the whole requirements of the case. It is a matter surrounded with some difficulties; but can, I believe, be remedied satisfactorily. Bear in mind that the miners of Kootenay have not asked to have this tax taken off; in fact, there were strong representations made that they desired to have it left on. They did not object to the tax, as they wish the privileges of locating and recording claims; but they do object to the working miners in the coal mines being exempted. There is a good deal of difference, however, after all, between metalliferous mining and coal mining, and the privilege of locating and recording claims, which is valuable to those engaged in one is totally useless to the other. There is really a new condition of affairs we have to deal with, now that mining has developed into a permanent industry,

and it is one with which former governments have not had to deal.

IMPORTANT INTERESTS.

I have not so far dealt specifically with the many important interests which have had the consideration of the government for a number of years—such as mining, agriculture, labor, etc., etc. Concerning these I have but to say that the legislation affecting them is before you in the statute books, and it is with pleasure that I can point to the fact that in each of these the government has adopted the most advanced and practical measures that are anywhere to be found in operation on this continent. In some important respects we have set the pace for the rest of the Dominion.

Mining and Mining Laws.

Our mining laws have reached a state of development admittedly equal, if not superior, to those of any other mining country in the world. The facilities which they afford for the prosecution of the industry, the protection which is extended to the interests of capital and labor employed therein, and the equitable manner in which the laws governing it are administered, are all recognized as eminently satisfactory and beneficial. The Dominion government has paid this Province the high compliment of adopting our code in its entirety for the whole Northwest Territory, and unorganized portions of Canada. I need not refer to the character of the work done by the mining bureau, inaugurated a year or two ago, or the splendid results that have been achieved. There is but one sentiment throughout the province in regard to that. The reports issued have inspired confidence everywhere, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that they are eagerly sought after and are reliable guides to our mineral resources.

Agricultural Legislation.

I have been accused of having made a "hobby" of finance by a leading member of the opposition, the editor of the News-Advertiser, who states that a man with a "hobby" is dangerous. Well, I never regarded it as a bad thing at all!

to have a "hobby." I never knew a man yet to succeed in anything who did not make it a hobby; and if the gentleman referred to congratulates himself upon his own failures arising from his lack of one, he is welcome to the consolation the fact affords him. I was going to say, however, that if I had a hobby other than finance it was the development of agricultural interests in this Province; and let me say here that in the attention which has been paid to agriculture in British Columbia and the practical legislation and administration affecting it, this province is clearly ahead of the other provinces and fully abreast of the times. I claim without fear of contradiction that the present interest which has been manifested among our farmers in their profession and the improved methods coming in vogue are a direct result of efforts the government has put forth. In the assistance given to agricultural societies; in aiding and encouraging the Fruit Growers', Flockmasters' and Dairying Associations, in establishing a Department of Agriculture, a Board of Horticulture for educational and protective purposes, and Farmers' Institutes, and our most recent act in providing for Agricultural Credit Associations and travelling libraries, a practical impetus has been given to the industry, and a far-reaching influence will be exercised in its future. Take the Board of Horticulture alone, and it has saved many thousands of dollars to the farmers in the rigid system of quarantine established, and will be productive of many thousands more in the practical assistance that its members have rendered to farmers. If other provinces had instituted a similar system it would not have been necessary for the Dominion government to have stopped the importation of nursery stock, which, though it may be necessary for the rest of Canada, is much to the detriment of British Columbia at the present time.

Cheap Money and Farmers' Institutes.

In the Farmers' Institutes a system has been established which is highly appreciated and is doing great good. By

the act providing for Agricultural Credit Associations, a system largely borrowed from Europe, where it has proved to be eminently successful and whereby the means it has at hand for obtaining money for purposes of development at low interest, tending to greatly cheapen the general rate, the government has taken a long step forward and has set an example to the whole continent. The Opposition in its efforts to weaken the cause of cheap money refer to it as "political humbug." It is significant, however, that they did not dare to oppose it in the House, though they did their best to render it inoperative by introducing amendments that if adopted would have made it useless. If it was "humbug" it was their duty to have opposed it. I may say that I was never more earnest or sincere in any public measure than in my endeavor to find a practical solution of the problem of "cheap money" as it is called, and I am fully impressed with the importance of the effort that has been made. No community had ever a better opportunity than the farmers of British Columbia now have to get money at practically government rates. The machinery is there to take hold of, and it rests with the farmers themselves. If the principle of co-operation is not accepted and acted upon, the government cannot be blamed. It is a new departure upon this continent, and will be a matter of slow growth; but if the system has stood the test of half a century in Europe, having attained to enormous proportions, then it should stand the test here.

An Agricultural Commission.

There are a number of other subjects—problems of agriculture—irrigation, the mortgage tax, cold storage, etc., which have been referred to a commission, composed of two men, whose position in relation to agricultural matters, and whose abilities as farmers must command the respect of all; and their selection will, in the judgment of all who know them, be the best guarantee that the government intends to deal seriously and earnestly with the subjects assigned to them for investigation. More I need not say.

Labor Laws.

In respect to labor interests, I can only repeat in other words what I have already stated when referring to the Alien law. No necessary measure of protection in the rights to which every man is entitled in pursuing his avocations of life has been denied. Not only do the many measures on the statute book testify to that, but the satisfactory relations which exist between the employer and employed in this province is proof of it.

BRITISH COLUMBIA WELL GOVERNED.

It is unnecessary here to refer to our municipal code, to the administration of justice, to the efficient system and high standard of education in the Province, to the laws which govern and affect personal and property rights or the high moral status of every community. These are well established in the good opinion of our own citizens and in the outside world as well.

All these are considerations which in a campaign of abuse and partizan opposition are lost sight of or studiously ignored by the opponents of the government. They are matters, however, for the electors to seriously consider, and considerations which induce the government to confidently seek their support and renewal of confidence. I say unhesitatingly that British Columbia is one of the best governed of the provinces today in all matters affecting the interests of its citizens.

A PARTY WITHOUT A POLICY.

There has not been throughout this

campaign a single detail of policy enunciated by the Opposition. They claim to have a platform, with numerous planks; but, I am open to contradiction when I say that, beyond the most virulent abuse and extravagant criticism of what the government has done, there has not been a single and well-defined statement of how the Opposition would have dealt with any of the many important matters that have been dealt with by the government, had they been in power; or how they propose to deal with any other matters that are now before or may come before the country in the near future. If this may not be true I challenge the production in tangible form of an answer. If it be true, then I ask you to accept the Opposition protestations at their true value.

In concluding my remarks to you, necessarily of a lengthened character, I make not personal appeals for support. I have been just ten years in public life as a minister of the Crown and as your servant in assisting in administering your affairs; and if in your opinion I have executed that trust faithfully I only request that you will continue to extend the confidence reposed in me and in the administration of which I have the honor to be leader, for so long, for still another term; and I shall, as in the past, endeavor to fulfill the duties pertaining to my office to the best of my ability in your interests and to your satisfaction.

I am, Gentlemen and Electors,
Yours faithfully,

J. H. TURNER.