

# PETITION.

VICTORIA, B.C., 2nd April, 1894.

*To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia:*

GENTLEMEN,—

The undersigned petitioner desires to draw the attention of your Honourable Body to the following facts:—

For a period of eight years the Government of the Province have paid from 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. more for their binding of the Statutes and other books than there has been any necessity for paying. (*See* pages 25, 55, 126, 130, &c., &c., Public Accounts ending June, 1893.) showing that the binding is costing more than half the amount paid out in salaries in the Government Printing Department for the vast amount of work performed by the Queen's Printer, or in round figures, the binding is costing over six thousand dollars per annum, or again in round figures, four thousand dollars more than the work is now worth.

The petitioner works his people shorter hours and pays higher wages, and has twice the amount of capital invested, than any other establishment of the kind in the Province, and has stood ready for years past to do the work for 50 per cent. less than the prices paid. In this work alone a saving of thousands of dollars could have been effected. Aside from the saving of money, is it just that only one line of business in the Province should be singled out by the Government, and excluded from the pay roll of distributing their patronage fair and square amongst those doing business in the Province? In other Provinces the work is given out by contract to the lowest bidder. It has at all times worked well elsewhere, and given satisfaction, why should there be any exception here? It is true that a few dollars have been paid me when the Government wanted a certain class of extra fine work done; as an example, the binding for the Columbian Exposition in 1893, which I had the honour of doing.

A Statute made and provided, and a former resolution of the House, has been disregarded—first by changing the style of the binding, which has destroyed the intention of said Statute in making a distinction between Sessional Papers and Statutes. (*See* Statutes and J. Act, page 917, Consolidated Laws, 1888), and not giving the work out by contract as per former resolution of the House.

In fact to put the whole thing in a nut shell, over 40 per cent. more was paid last year than we agreed to do the work for eight years ago—while stock and labour is at least 20 per cent. less than it was in 1886.

The binding should be given out to public competition, as there are four binding establishments in the Province capable of doing the work.

An immediate inquiry should be held, so that the work for 1894 may not be given out until prices are obtained from competent binders.

Being a heavy tax-payer, and one that has invested his money in building up the Province, you will, I feel sure, see the justice of my petition.

And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

ROBERT T. WILLIAMS.