which I might mention. Shortly after July 30 rumors and statements began to be circulated that V. V. Ashford, although he commanded the force against Wilcox, yet knew more than he ought to about that movement, and that his heart was not entirely in the action which he took that day. At first I did not take much stock in these rumors, for people talk as much here as they do anywhere; but as time passed, I received intimations that there were facts at the bottom of these reports, and I thought that I ought to investigate. I did not consult C. W. Ashford. Blood is thicker than water. Although I will state that I had at that time implicit confidence in the attorney-general. As a result of my investigations I have statements in writing from friends of the Government, from enemies, and from neutrals, and I state unhesitatingly that V. V. Ashford knew of and counseled and advised the disturbance of last July; that he sent messengers to Wilcox saying that the King and the cabinet were at loggerheads, and that now was the time to act.

Matters were quiet after the 30th of July, so far as his action was concerned, except that his conduct was characterized by the most violent denunciations of the cabinet, publicly and without stint, to such an extent that a member of the diplomatic corps came to a member of the cabinet, and although as he said he was acting beyond the scope of his official duty, warned them not to have confidence in a man talking as V. V. Ashford was.

V. V. Ashford became a frequent contributor to opposition newspapers, declaring against the Government in the bitterest terms, giving out false statements with regard to the cabinet, and stating that he got them from his brother, although I did not believe anything of the sort. As an illustration, one of the members of this house lately told me that at about that time Mr. Ashford told him that he was so anxious to have this ministry turned out that he would rather have the country go back to what it would have been in office, and would rather see the country reduced to ashes than have them remain.

So matters continued. Mr. President, until two or three weeks before the election. That was a time of a good deal of uncertainty. Both parties were confident, and neither was sure. At that time V. V. Ashford had a quarrel with his political friends. Although in a position as commander of the volunteer forces, of high responsibility and trust under the Government, he had been an active political worker against the Government. Then he sent word to me and asked for a truce between himself and the Government, and asked that I make an appointment with him (which for reasons was not kept), a second, which also was not kept, and finally a third was made, which was kept in my office. In the presence of a mutual friend the interview was held, and he made this statement. He said that he wished to be perfectly frank. He said that he had worked against the Government, admitted that he had been writing for the Elele to a large extent, but was sick of his associates, they were a mean lot generally and he wanted to be done with them. He offered either to retain his position as colonel and work secretly for us or to resign altogether and take the stamp openly. He made, however, one condition. He said, "My reason for opposition to you has been my belief that you and the other members of the cabinet were engaged in a conspiracy against my brother. But if you will publicly declare that you will promise to stand by him in the next Legislature, I will do all that I can for you."

I heard all that he had to say, and then replied what we wanted is votes. Votes are what counts, and that we should be glad of your assistance and vote and the votes that you control. As for promises, I have stood by you straight through and have done nothing for you that I ever agreed to do, and the only result has been that you have constantly villified me. I consider myself discharged of any obligations to you and will make no promises and no agreements with you. As far as the relations of the cabinet to C. W. Ashford are concerned your course will have nothing to do with it. C. W. Ashford has stood by us so far as I know and we propose to stand by him, and if we go down we will go down together.

Shortly after the election of the colonel came up, V. V. Ashford was elected. The election was certified up to the cabinet and it became our duty to decide whether to approve or reject it, and it was not until after consideration of all the facts that I have mentioned, that we came to the conclusion that it was our duty not to indorse the election, and that we would be faithless to the interests of the community if we again allowed that man to go in as the head of the military. I don't say that we had evidence to warrant his arrest and trial. We did not feel justified in taking that action, but we did feel justified in refusing to ratify his election, as we knew that he was a man in whom we could not confide in case of another 30th of July.

We therefore did not ratify him to the King, and the matter was referred back to the officers again. Mr. V. V. Ashford asked for our reasons, and was refused to give them orally, but said that if he would make application in writing we would state them in writing. He stated that he would apply in writing, but later he sent a letter to the minister of foreign affairs stating that he would make no written application, as it was contrary to military principles and etiquette.