The next step was his reflection by a majority of the officers. Before we took action on the reflection the attorney-general returned.

This brings me to the third branch of my statement, viz, the reason why we have distrusted C. W. Ashford, and this brings me to one of the most painful experiences of my life, because C. W. Ashford has not only been my official companion for three years, but because ever since he came here, seven years ago, he has been my intimate friend, and in this world intimate friends are not many. I have worked with him, trusted him, have passed through trying periods with him, shoulder to shoulder, have stood by him. When prominent members proposed to put him out of the cabinet last Legislature and go on with a new minister, I said no, if we go out we go out together. And I wish to say here that I believe, and know from previous experiences many years, that we have never had an attorney-general who has worked harder and more faithfully in the conduct of the business of his office than he has.

The relations of the cabinet with the attorney-general continued most cordial up to the time of his departure for the United States. He has mentioned a point of difference of opinion with regard to the treaty. It did not interfere with our cordial relations and was solely a matter of discussion, and was adjusted by the cabinet. As evidence of this and against the published statements made by C. W. Ashford, over his own signature, and before the finance committee I will read from the reply on October 4 last to the committee which waited on the cabinet concerning the treaty.

This reply was constructed in the following manner: After full discussion of the whole topic, each member of the cabinet made a draft of a reply. Then sections were taken from each and embodied in the final draft, so that the three replies, including Mr. Ashford’s, are there. The beginning shows that it is the reply of the whole cabinet, and the title so states. The ministers take pleasure in informing you, etc. It is signed by the minister of foreign affairs because it was a matter of his department. I will read a passage, showing that there was no difference of opinion at that time:

"Animated as we are by the desire to strengthen and extend the commercial ties which have done so much for our national prosperity, and to secure the safety and perpetuation of our institutions by an alliance whereby we shall have the positive and efficacious guarantee of a strong friend against interference by itself or others with our perfect autonomy, independence, and sovereignty, we have instructed our representative at Washington to ascertain if the United States would be willing to negotiate with us a convention whereby the following objects may be secured."

"The cabinet for more than a year has studied carefully many reasons for and against the points submitted for negotiation, and has taken counsel with others, both connected and unconnected with the Government, and has considered various propositions and suggestions, some of which have been approved and some disapproved."

"Any statements of objects or intentions, and any purported draft of a treaty stating more or other than is above indicated which may have been published, are unfounded and incorrect."

"The ministers are strongly and unanimously of the opinion that the accomplishment of the objects above indicated will tend to greatly increase the material prosperity of the country, and perpetuate the independence of Hawaii and the sovereignty of His Majesty and his successors over all his dominions."

Mr. Ashford left on November 16, 1889, with the utmost cordiality of feeling between the cabinet. He left, as he stated, on account of his health, expecting to stay over one steamer. Two personal notes were all we had from him until his return on March 8, 1890. We had otherwise no direct communication with him, but saw numerous interviews in the papers in which he discussed all sorts of subjects, treaties, steamship and telegraph communication from Canada, all vital matters which should have been dealt with by one in his office only with the advice and consent of the cabinet. What he did in Canada we do not know. He gave us the barest outline of what he did. He did state that he had an interview with the Canadian prime minister, that he traveled as a guest of the Canadian Pacific Railroad in a private car—[Attorney General, No]. Then some one else told me about the private car; and to this day we don’t know what his objects were or what he did. The first question which came up after his return was the colonelcy.

The attorney-general having returned just before the second election, when the question came up he immediately called upon the cabinet to reverse its decision on the matter, to nominate Mr. V. V. Ashford to the King, and to appoint him. It is unnecessary to say that the cabinet pursued no such humiliating course, but followed its previous decision. The attorney-general stated that he considered this action against his brother as simply an attack upon the Ashford family, and he was not going to stand it. The question had to be settled, and the attorney-general was requested to state whether he intended to carry his opposition so far as to advise the King not to confirm the nominee of the cabinet. Mr. Ashford refused to state