Wednesday, February 17th, 1906.

Extract from minutes of Council meeting:

Report of committee consisting of A. H. Lund, O. F. Whitney, B. H. Roberts and James E. Talmage, read as follows:

To the First Presidency of the Church, Dear Brethren:

With reference to the question submitted to your Committee concerning the use of the term "cestial marriage" and "patriarchal marriage", we beg leave to report as follows:

There is no use made of these terms in the "Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, including Plurality of wives," nor in any of the books recognized as the authoritative scriptures of the Church. The use of the term "cestial marriage" like the use of the term "Mormonism", while admissible, is not authoritative. In some books of a secondary character, written by prominent elders in the Church, and in the affidavits given on the subject of plural marriage, (See affidavits of Joseph B. Nobles, B. F. Johnston, John Benbow, et al., "Historical Record," page 221, et seq) there has grown up a use of these terms which requires explanation. Perhaps the term "cestial marriage" naturally arose from the statement in section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants wherein is recorded certain remarks of the Prophet Joseph Smith at DeKalb, Illinois, May 16th and 17th, 1843, namely, "In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees, and in order to obtain the highest a man must enter into this order of Priesthood (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage), and if he does not he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase."

It is held that the words in parenthesis in the above quotation are an interpolation, and doubtless that is true, since they do not occur in the passage as it stands in the Prophet's History. (See Millennial Star, Volume 21, page 108). But that the doctrine that the prophet here refers to is the everlasting covenant of marriage rather than to a plurality of wives is evident, or else we would have him stand committed to the doctrine that only those who have a plurality of wives can be blessed with the power and privilege of eternal increase, a doctrine that we venture to suggest is untenable; and we are further inclined to the view that the Prophet had in mind marriage as an everlasting covenant rather than plural marriage, in the above passage, because under the same date and at the same place and time of the Prophet's delivery of the passage already quoted, he also said: "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection, but those who are married by the power and authority of the Priesthood in this life and continue without committing sin against the Holy Ghost will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory." (Millennial Star; Vol.21, page 105).

Elder Orson Pratt in the "Seer" published in Washington, in 1852, wrote a series of articles under the title
"Celestial Marriage", with this as a sub-title: "A revelation on the Patriarchal order of Matrimony and Plurality of Wives", and then throughout the articles, judging by the spirit of them, however, rather than any definite expression in terms, speaks of "celestial marriage" and "patriarchal marriage" as synonymous with plural marriage. Orson Pratt's "Seer" however was expressly and formally repudiated by the Church Authorities over the signature of the First Presidency of the Church and the Twelve Apostles, Elder Pratt himself sanctioning the repudiation, (See Deseret News of August 23rd 1865); so we assume it may be held that his use of these terms is not approved by the Church.

In the later writings of prominent elders in the Church a distinction has been drawn between "Celestial Marriage" and "Plural Marriage", and this with the approval of the Church Authorities, as follows:

"It was in Nauvoo that the Prophet introduced celestial marriage—the marriage system which obtains in the celestial worlds. It consists of the eternity of the marriage covenant; that is, the marriage covenant between a man and his wife is made for time and all eternity, and being sealed by that power of the priesthood which binds on earth and in heaven, the covenant holds good in heaven as well as on earth, and by reason of it men will have claim upon their wives, and wives upon their husbands in and after the resurrection. Celestial marriage may also include a plurality of wives."

(see Outlines of Ecclesiastical History, Section IX, page 394.)

Knowing this statement to be published with the sanction of the First Presidency, Elder James E. Talmage makes substantially the same distinction in his "Articles of Faith" pages 457-8. But his treatment of the subject was also submitted to the First Presidency and published with their approval.

When Elder James E. Talmage went to Washington to testify before the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections in the Smoot Case, he went as an instructed witness to perfect as far as possible the record in the matter of Church doctrine, and that there might be a perfect understanding as to what his answers should be on several important points of doctrine, a committee went through the evidence (so far as then published) of the Smoot case, and several questions were submitted to the Presidency of the Church and a number of the Twelve to know if the answers formulated in substance by the committee would be consonant with their views. Some of these points related to this question of marriage, namely, as to whether the revelation, in so far as it related to a plurality of wives, was mandatory or permissive. It was agreed that the answer should be mandatory as to the Prophet Joseph Smith; as to all others permissive. And as to the phrase "Celestial Marriage" it was agreed that it should be held to mean a "marriage for eternity", and that "celestial marriage" is not synonymous with "polygamous marriage". (See Smoot Hearings, Volume 3, pages 42 to 45)

This was the answer agreed upon by the present Authorities of the Church, and would seem to commit the Church to the view here expressed as to "celestial marriage", namely, that "celestial marriage" primarily is an eternal marriage covenant, and may or may not include plurality of wives. Plurality
of wives is not essential to the fact of "cestial marriage". "Patriarchal marriage" we hold is susceptible of the same definition. It is the marriage custom that obtained among the Bible Patriarchs, and was primarily a marriage custom that was everlasting, and may or may not be a plural marriage; the eternity of the marriage covenant, not the number of wives, being the determining factor in Patriarchal as well as in "cestial marriage".

As to the effect of these definitions upon the case of Brother Budge, we would say that the fact as to whether his celestial marriage is plural or single would be the determining factor as to whether or not he could hold office under the Idaho Constitution, since the term "cestial marriage" used in the Idaho Constitution and statutes, also in the congressional enactments on the subjects, means only plural marriages. The use of the terms "cestial marriage" and "patriarchal marriage", as being synonymous with "Plural Marriage", and meaning no other than plural marriage, is an invention of the legislators and came into existence because of the extreme desire to cover every possible description of title in their legislation under which polygamous marriages could be performed. But this use of the term is the legislators', and the Church may not be charged with it.

In proof of the correctness of the statement that "cestial marriage" in congressional enactments means only plural marriages, we call attention to the fact that during the period of the severest anti-polygamy prosecutions in Utah and Idaho, and in the extreme interpretation by the Utah Commission on qualifications of electors, at no time was any person disfranchised, nor was anyone prosecuted for entering into marriage relations for eternity. All of which is respectfully submitted.

(President Smith, commenting on the word "doubtless" in the third paragraph on the first page, said, that there was no question about this being an interpolation, and it was well known that the interpolation was made by Bro. Orson Pratt, in order to make clear the fact that the remarks of the Prophet referred to the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.)