

that he did not venture that extraordinary, that almost appalling reason that he gave the other day for not taking suggestions on this subject from this side of the House, when, as he will remember, he stated that these suggestions, while they did not amount to much, as they were practically covered by the order in council out of which the commission comes, still they might be accepted by the government were it not that the opposition and their press would say that we had forced the hands of the government on the subject.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. Does the hon. gentleman profess to be quoting what I said?

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I am not quoting verbatim, but I think I am doing the hon. gentleman justice, and I think he said even worse than that. Still, as I understood him, that was one of his strongest arguments on the last occasion when this subject was discussed for not accepting suggestions from this side of the House.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I presume that the hon. gentleman will not object to me setting him right. I do not attach very much importance to the hon. gentleman's reference, but it might be assumed, that if I allowed him to make it without protest, he was correctly stating the effect of what I said. What I did say was this: I said distinctly, in answer to the hon. leader of the opposition (Sir Charles Tupper), who made a most vituperative attack on the government, attributing all sorts of motives, in answer to the motives which he attributed, that he would justify the inference that his whole object, in asking that these provisions be put in was that he might be in a position to say if we accept them, that we were forced to do it by the other side, and if we did not accept them to cry out to the country that we tried to suppress the inquiry.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Here it is verbatim et literatim:

It is quite patent that the object of the leader of the opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) has been to demand that some changes should be made in the language of the commission, so that in the event of these changes being accepted by the government, the hon. gentleman and his friends and his press could circulate broadcast throughout the country that the government commission was defective in most important particulars and that it would have failed to make a proper inquiry were it not that the opposition forced the government to introduce the amending words.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. That is just what I say.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Sir Charles Tupper then says:

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Am I to understand that that is the ground on which they are refused?

The hon. gentleman (Mr. Blair) does not give as direct an answer as one would suppose from what he states this evening. He says:

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. That is, undoubtedly, the object of the leader of the opposition in making these proposals.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I did not say that that was the reason for refusing.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. That is my appreciation and recollection of his language, so that I do not think there is a very great difference. But, it is clear enough, it is beyond reasonable argument, that there is now a broad line between the policy of the opposition and the policy of the government in reference to this commission and the scope of this commission. I feel confident that any one, referring to the language used by the right hon. leader of the government at the close of the debate when the Prime Minister stated to this House and to the country that a commission would issue in response to the suggestions having come from this side of the House, must admit that the utterances of hon. members on this side of the House since that are more in keeping with the promises and statements of the Prime Minister as to the scope of the commission than the technical and narrow arguments used by the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals this evening, because the hon. gentleman, eminent lawyer though he is, has to admit the strength of the arguments advanced by the hon. senior member for Halifax (Mr. Borden). He could not brush them away as idle, he could not term them captious. The hon. gentleman several times referred to the opinion of the hon. Minister of Justice. They have a responsibility, and it is not for the opposition to dictate to them in matters where there are legal questions involved, and they are perfectly within their rights if they stand on the opinion of the law officers of the Crown. But, in a matter where, as it seems to me, the case is for parliamentary action and not for government action merely, where something is being done under the auspices of parliament, in parliament assembled, and not under the auspices of the government, I think that the views of different gentlemen, at any rate, those learned in the law, should be entitled to more consideration than they have received to-night. The criticism was made in regard to the opinion of the hon. Minister of Justice, made without offence, that it bore upon its face signs of haste, signs that it had not been considered. When it was read in the House the Prime