

case on hand, they teach us not to yield to the platitudes and propositions of the First Minister, and to regard our ancient rights jealously, and not part with one of them. The day may come when we may require them. (*Cheers.*)

The arguments of the Premier upon this—the prerogative and the rights of the Crown contrasted with the rights of Parliament—are, as are many of his arguments, entirely inconsistent. It is one of the weaknesses, if I may be pardoned in speaking of that astute person, that he is so impressed with the importance of arguing the points from every position, that even in the same speech he makes statements diametrically opposed to each other and inconsistent propositions.

In his speech last night they heard in his arguments with regard to the two branches of the Legislature inconsistent propositions. At one time he said there was no danger in the exercise of the prerogative, as it was really the property of the Ministers through the people; the next moment he said that which was quite different.

He told us, then, very strongly, that the Crown had its independent right; that as an independent branch of the Legislature, the Crown had a right to issue this Commission, and to send papers and despatches to the House for which they could find no one responsible. Let us steer an even course between these arguments, neither diminishing nor extending these prerogatives.

Then I maintain that no word the hon. gentleman has said was sufficient to justify that invasion of the rights of Parliament, which was created by the constitution of this Commission, based as it was on words spoken by my hon. friend in his place here, and for the investigation of the charges, it having to do, as it had, with high crimes and misdemeanours alleged against the Ministers of the Crown and members of this House, therefore it was the exclusive property of the people's House. What an instance of weakness that was, and what extremities was the hon. gentleman reduced to, when he was forced strenuously, earnestly—might I say theatrically?—to argue that he had communicated the charges of the hon. member for Shefford (Hon. Mr. Huntington) to the Crown, because he sent a Bill to the Senate to empower this House to examine witnesses under oath. That Bill did not say anything about these charges, it was a general law; but the hon. gentleman said he communicated these charges in order to induce him to do that futile thing which he knew was a futile thing—obtain his assent to the Bill in the middle of the session. I know of no authorization for him to inform His Excellency of what was passing in this Chamber. I say it was the height of audacity, and an insult to this Chamber, to tell us by word, act, or deed of the violation, infringement, or waiving of any one of the privileges belonging to us. The member, if he made it, made it on his own responsibility, and if he did he is guilty of a crime which will not fortify him, but weaken his position before the Chamber, before which he was on trial.

The hon. gentleman had utterly failed to produce a precedent for such a Commission as this. The hon. gentleman brought forward on a similar occasion the Ceylon Commission. That precedent,

however, no longer did duty. It has exploded, but he brings forward another. He took the case of the Madeira Commission, but he knew that precedent had no application, so in his defence he does not bring that forward as a precedent, but he falls upon a precedent in the Melville case, which was directly against him. This was a Parliamentary Commission, and not a Royal Commission, to enquire into a case with reference to the navy which had been prevalent for some time. He asked the House if that be the nearest precedent for this Royal Commission. Not sanctioned by the House, not asked for by the House, and disapproved by the House. The precedent was the clearest and strongest proof that British history furnished no authority on which the hon. gentleman acted.

He, however, says that the Crown, as the first branch of the Legislature, had a right to exercise the prerogative. He also said there was nothing particular in these charges to prevent the Senate from having a Committee to investigate them. Certainly not, if the Committee were founded on information which they might properly have, but there would be no authority for the Senate taking up the hon. gentleman's charge and founding a Committee upon it, nor was there any authority for the Crown taking up the hon. gentleman's charge.

Did the right hon. gentleman tell us, in the speech which he advised His Excellency to deliver on the 13th of August, he was advising the issue of a Commission to enquire into the charges? The Speech from the Throne stated that a Commission would be appointed to enquire into certain matters connected with the Pacific Railway. For all I know that Commission was perfectly legal; but when the Commission was issued, instead of being of that character, it recited the motion of the hon. member for Shefford (Hon. Mr. Huntington) and the order the House made upon that motion. The hon. gentleman ought to have presented to this House some better argument, some better reason for the advice he gave. Upon that occasion he tells you that there are statutes which justify it, but, my hon. friend from Durham West (Hon. Mr. Wood) has shown clearly that the statute merely provided for such Commissions certain powers.

What was the revolting scene depicted by the Minister last night? Going about the country asking one judge and another to become his judge in this great State trial. He would ask one judge to come, who would say "I cannot, but I recommend you to so and so." The right hon. gentleman had caused a Commission to be issued, the men named by himself to try himself. He has made efforts to persuade us that the judges must be impartial, but such arguments as that ought to convince, and I hope every man with a sense of public duty is convinced, that that was one which cannot be sustained. (*Applause.*)

The hon. gentleman is not fond of ancient precedents, and asks us to abandon them altogether. He says with the new light we possess, we can safely abandon our old lamps that have guided the footsteps of our forefathers for so long a period. I profess to be a Conservative of the Constitution of the country, the principles of British labour, and the securities for popular rights. (*Hear, hear.*) I