

THE VALIQUETTE CASE.

Mr. BLAKE. With reference to the other return, regarding Valiquette, which the hon. gentleman brought down, I wish to call his attention to a letter which, it seems to me, indicates that the return ought to be supplemented. The following letter appears in the return from Antoine Valiquette to M. le Colonel Lamontagne:

"After having waited a long time, I see the necessity of having recourse to you with reference to a pension which was granted me by the Government on the decease of my son, Sergeant Primi Valiquette, who died in the North-West in the service of his country, on the 4th July, 1855. In the month of May that pension was granted to me, and a few days later I received a departmental letter from the office in Montreal, asking me to go there and draw the sum of \$812.51. The same day Colonel Hughes came at my place, saying that he had been working in order to procure a pension for each child, and asked me for a power of attorney (which I gave him), authorizing him to act in my name. Under this power of attorney he drew my money, and remitted to me one-half of the sum, that is \$206, and some months afterwards, \$130, and nothing more afterwards. I do not know when the next payment will come. Will you be good enough to conclude this affair, and tell me when the next payment will come, and the balance of the first payment. In doing so you would oblige a poor, sick old man who seeks protection."

That letter, put upon the Table of the House, leaves Colonel Hughes in a very painful position which has been altogether unexplained, and there is a later letter in a similar strain. I suppose there has been an enquiry.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. I have ordered an enquiry.

Mr. BLAKE. It appears, so far, that Colonel Hughes had a power of attorney, that he received this amount and remitted the half of it, and held the remainder for some time, how long we know not. Will the hon. gentleman bring down a statement showing the regulations as to officers of the Government being allowed to act as attorneys. My impression is that there is a general regulation forbidding gentlemen in the public service to act as attorneys for public creditors. It is a wise regulation, as this case proves, if the statements made are correct.

SUPPLY—TRENT VALLEY CANAL.

Mr. BLAKE. I really think it is about time that this question of the canal should be settled. Certainly, as long ago as before the election of 1882, the hon. First Minister did make a promise in the town of Peterborough that the canal should be built. Certainly, for years after that time the Minister of Railways and Canals reiterated that promise, and

time after time it was indicated that reports were being obtained as to what the cost would be; and, if I remember aright, Mr. Rubidge was named as the officer from whom those reports were expected. Ultimately, an intimation was given, in the Railway Committee room, or somewhere else, in the Railway department which called on the Government to redeem its pledges—which had been very extensively used in a large number of the ridings bordering on the route of the projected canal—that the cost of the work was roughly estimated, I think, at the sum of \$9,000,000. Another election came on, when I have no doubt further pressure was put upon the Government, and after the election of 1887, it seems that for the first time the Government took the step of appointing a commission. Their doing so at that time was, of course, an indication that they had neglected their duty up to that time. If they were going to make the building of the canal contingent on the commission giving a satisfactory statement of its cost, there should have been no such pledge as was given in 1882, and kept dangling before the eyes of the people for years afterwards. This commission has, I think, for nearly three years, had the matter in hand, and the hon. gentleman does not yet give an intimation when their report is expected. He says that somebody was ill and went to Europe, but that there is no hurry, because the work is going on all the time. But how do we know that it is work on the canal? To do work of this kind piecemeal, if it is to be part of the great communication between the upper and the lower lakes, may be to do it in an extremely wasteful way. It may be that the work being done is adequate for the purpose of local communication, and yet it may be inadequate for the purpose of the large work if it ever comes to be accomplished. What I do say is that what was in a sense formally initiated as a pledged Government undertaking, as early as before the elections of 1882, ought not to be in the condition it is in to-day, nearly eight years later, namely, that for five or six years a step which the Government then declared to be essential, the formation of a commission, is delayed, and then the report of that commission is postponed for three or four years, and we do not know when it is to be obtained. I think the hon. gentleman ought to see this thing expedited; the report should be obtained early and a decision reached; and the people who are interested in this project, and who have been waiting for it and hanging on the hon. gentleman's words so many years, should be relieved in one way or another, by a determination either to proceed with the work or to abandon it.

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