

I am aware that in directing attention to these facts I am undertaking a duty which some may characterize as Quixotic, and that I shall incur the severe displeasure of partizans and of those whose influence caused the appointment of the Commission. Be that as it may, I must protest against injustice. I feel very strongly that the charges preferred against me, with all the weight and authority of a Royal Commission, are wholly unmerited. My personal character and professional reputation are both assailed, and I cannot remain under the burden of the obloquy cast upon me without an attempt, however feeble, to remove it.

I shall, in the first place, very briefly refer to some of the circumstances which led to the appointment of the Royal Commission:—

1. A large sum of money had been expended under three distinct Administrations:

- (1) On the surveys, which began in 1871.
- (2) On construction, which began in 1874.
- (3) In the purchase of steel rails in 1874 and 1879.

2. Committees of the Commons and Senate had been appointed in the years 1875, 1876, 1878 and 1879 to enquire into various matters, among others: the expenditure of the Engineering Department, through Mr. William Wallace; expenditure on the Georgian Bay Branch; the route of the railway west of Keewatin; alleged irregularities in awarding contracts; expenditure on the Fort Frances Lock; on the purchase of steel rails; on the purchase of land at Fort William; expenditure on telegraph construction, and on other matters directly and indirectly connected with the railway.

3. The evidence taken at these several examinations was voluminous. By virtue of my office, I was generally in the position of principal witness, and not seldom had to pass through an ordeal of examination and cross-examination, by opposing politicians, who desired testimony that would serve party purposes. My invariable rule was to conceal nothing and to defend all proper acts of the Department to which my office was attached. This course did not give satisfaction to all. Partizans expected that when the Government changed, I should change too and join them in traducing the previous Administration. I declined to lend myself to party. It only concerned me to act for the best under all circumstances, and loyally uphold the acts of the Department. This course more than once led to serious difficulties; but it was the only course open to me with honor, and if in the same position again, I would follow no other course.

4. I may recall to mind the state of affairs for two years following the advent of Mr. Mackenzie's Administration when, day after day, during the sitting of the Committees, I gave evidence which was unacceptable to many of the Government supporters of that day, some of whom never fully forgave me. When the present party came into power the same experience was repeated; it was intensified by the fact that the previous Administration had the Pacific Railway under control for five years, while their predecessors had it for only two. It became my duty, as chief executive officer, to defend the acts of the Department under the Reform Administration. I was prepared to serve the new Administration as faithfully as the past, but I could not turn round and calumniate those I had previously served. Hence, a bitter feeling arose against me among some of the supporters of the present Government, which with concurrent circumstances of less importance, brought matters to a culmination.

5. Grave charges were made in the House of Commons; every one of which I fully disproved in a memorandum dated, 26th March, 1880, appended.* This was followed by a caucus, referred to at page 1697. At this caucus, the hostile pressure was great and the Government promised the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate matters.

After the lapse of two years the Royal Commission has failed to substantiate the charges made against me in 1880. They re-affirm only one of them, viz:—that "I

* See Appendix No. 1.