

—speaks, however, of “the evil arising” from the existing state of things, and refers to Colonel Crofton, who resided for a considerable period at Red River, in command of a detachment of troops at Fort Garry, as a person from whom he had “derived much valuable information.” On the 8th of February, 1848, Mr. Hawes, the Under Secretary, forwarded to this gentleman, then resident in Ireland, copies of the memorial, &c., and addressed to him a letter, in which occurs the following passage:—“Great difficulty is experienced in arriving at a just conclusion upon them in consequence of the charges against the Company, and their defence, *both resting, to a great extent, on mere assertion* ;” (Ib. p. 98.) A similar letter was addressed by Mr. Hawes to Major Griffith, Colonel Crofton’s successor in command of the troops.

From neither of these gentlemen did the Colonial Office obtain much more than “*mere assertion*.” Their opportunities of observation were of the slightest kind, and limited to a very small portion of the Company’s territories; nearly all their information was derived from the dependents of the Company; as to some of the charges they avowed their entire ignorance, and yet they did not hesitate to denounce even these, along with the rest, as false and calumnious, (Ib. p p. 101, 109.) In short, the bias of the referees in favour of the Company, which would, of course, take care to be on good terms with military officers, was too manifest: they proved far too much, that is, if “*mere assertion*” can be said to prove anything. Yet, on no better testimony than this, Earl Grey decided that there were no grounds for a parliamentary investigation. Being urged by Mr. Isbister to institute an enquiry, either by a commission on the spot, or before a committee of the House of Commons, His Lordship declined to take either course, but proposed, in conformity with the advice of the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, that the whole case should be submitted to the Judicial Committee, or to the Committee of Trade, Mr. Isbister, or his colleague, Mr. J. M’Loughlin, undertaking all the responsibility, and bearing the expense of the proceeding. Both gentlemen having, very naturally, refused to abide by so unreasonable a proposition, on a question affecting great national interests, which it was obviously the duty of Government to probe