

Our proposal was practically this: We said, in the first place, that the government proposals were dangerous, expensive and practically useless; we said, in the second place, that there should be an appeal to the people and that the people should be permitted to pronounce upon the proposals before any permanent policy should be entered upon, and we said, in the third place, that in the meantime there should be effective and immediate aid to the empire. I stand today where I stood a year ago in regard to this question. Not only in the interest of the government, but in the interest of some united action by the people of Canada along this line I believe it would have been infinitely better if the government had taken the people into their confidence and had not embarked upon any permanent policy until the people had had an opportunity of pronouncing upon it.

Now, I have just one more subject to which I desire to allude, and that is a matter upon which the papers have already been laid on the table of the House. It has been a noted characteristic of this government ever since it came into power in 1896 to deny investigation by this House of Commons into maladministration in the several departments of the government. I do not make that statement without warrant for it. I have made some research over the past ten or twelve or fourteen years. I have not attempted to make an exhaustive research, nor do I pretend for one moment that the list of investigations refused which I propose to give to the House is an exhaustive one. I have no doubt but the list must be very greatly increased, and I have no doubt that very important omissions will be found by any hon. gentleman who is able to go into this question more thoroughly than I have been able to do. In 1899, three years after this government came into power, on the 13th April, as recorded in 'Hansard' at page 1499, Mr. E. F. Clarke of happy memory whose death was a loss to this House and the country, moved:—

That in view of the widespread charges of incapacity, misconduct and corruption in public affairs connected with the Yukon, a judicial commission should make a thorough investigation and report the result.

The same year, on the 27th June, as recorded in 'Hansard' at page 6022, Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper moved:—

That two judges of the Supreme Court or two judges of any Superior Court be appointed with the fullest possible powers for a complete, effectual and extensive inquiry into affairs connected with the Yukon.

The motion provided that in case Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper did not prove his

charges he would forfeit not only his seat in the House but the right to hold any office in the gift of the Crown. Both of these motions, that moved by Mr. Clarke and that moved by Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, were voted down by the government majority of the day, although the press of this country and the press of Great Britain as well was teeming with suspicion and with disgraceful statements respecting the administration of public affairs in the Yukon at that time. In 1906, on the 18th May, as recorded in 'Hansard' at page 3629, I moved that:—

A committee of seven members be appointed to inquire into and investigate the expenditure of public moneys in or by the Department of Marine and Fisheries from and after the 30th day of June, 1902, and to inquire whether any abuses, irregularities, improvidence or maladministration have arisen or occurred in respect of such expenditure, and whether any persons employed in or connected with the said department have profited thereby, and whether any additional safeguards should be provided in respect of the expenditure of public money in or by the said department and to report upon the matters aforesaid.

Was that a justifiable motion? Let the commissioners, Mr. Courtney and Mr. Fyshe and Mr. Bazin, in the report which they made to parliament, answer. Is there a man in this House, is there a man in this country who, in view of the disclosures both in that report and in the report of Mr. Justice Cassels afterwards, will deny that the government and their followers were absolutely recreant to their duty when they denied the complete parliamentary investigation which I moved for at that time?

In 1906, on the 30th of May, as reported in 'Hansard' at page 4187, I moved:

That a committee of nine members be appointed to inquire into the management of public lands, and whether there have been any improper, unauthorized, or improvident dealings or transactions in respect thereof.

My hon. friend who moved this motion has spoken of the necessity of conservation in this country. Conservation is very necessary but it might well have commenced a little earlier than it did. There were disclosures in parliament, there were papers brought down which indicated that the public domain in this country had not been administered in the interests of the people, that it had been administered in the interests of a great many members of the Liberal party, and was there any reason under Heaven why an inquiry, a prompt, thorough and searching inquiry into the administration of the public domain in the west of Canada should not have been made at that time? Was this motion granted? It was not granted. Why was it not granted?