

to consult the Government in reference to the matter, long before the Arbitrators sat; and I know that the other gentlemen, the late Chief Justice Harrison and Sir Francis Hincks, also considered this subject very fully. To sanction the appointment of this Committee to seek to set aside the award of these gentlemen would be as great a wrong, as gross breach of faith, as if one Administration of this country were to repudiate the public debt incurred by another Administration, or do anything which, in the public estimation, it is derogatory for a Government to do. I think the House ought not to grant this Committee; such a Committee cannot without dishonour and bad faith be appointed. If the Government think that the Arbitrators were bribed, or that they were wholly incompetent men, then they ought to assume the responsibility of opening up the question only with the consent of the other party, and by obtaining information through the proper channels, instead of appointing a Committee, a course which can lead to nothing but delay in the confirmation of the award which has been made.

Mr. McDONALD (Pictou): I do not intend to occupy the House at present with any discussion on the merits of the important question raised by the motion of the hon. member for Algoma; and I trust, in saying so, I shall fulfil my promise better than the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, and who began by saying he did not intend to discuss the merits of the question. Of course, I will not contradict him, but the House must judge as to whether my hon. friend has not, during the time he has occupied, fully discussed the merits, in fact has made to my mind a case which imperatively demands the enquiry which the hon. gentleman for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) seeks. Now, the only embarrassment, if embarrassment should be felt on the subject—a subject so important to the whole Dominion and to the Government having charge of the interests of the Dominion, when we are required to abandon a tract of territory large enough to constitute a Province equal, as was remarked by the hon. member for Algoma, to the territory of all the Lower Provinces,—I say, if any embarrassment should be felt, it would be from the high standing, the high character, and the

great learning of the gentlemen whose award will probably be under review of the Committee sought for by this resolution. But it does appear to me that this House would be wanting in its duty to the country if it allowed any decision, coming from men however eminent, to control the interests of the country and to deprive the Dominion of its territory, if in their opinion the decision arrived at was erroneous—not wilfully erroneous, for no one would imagine for a moment that either of the eminent men who composed this tribunal, could come to any decision that was not dictated by the purest motives and, I have no doubt, by the most searching enquiry. But, on a question of this character, I think there is nothing derogatory to the position which they occupy, to order an enquiry—and the fullest enquiry—before this House, or before any tribunal that this House may think proper to appoint, for the purpose of reconsidering the decision at which these gentlemen have arrived. It may be, as the hon. mover of the resolution has stated, that, on that occasion, the case of the Dominion was not fully put. It may be, as the hon. mover of this resolution says, that further information has been obtained, which it is desirable should be considered, in connection with the adjudication on this important subject; and, if I recollect aright, in the able report of the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), made at the instance of the Ontario Government, he challenged the validity and force of a judgment bearing on this question given in the Supreme Court of Quebec, on the ground that, at the time the judgment was given, all the facts and circumstances which have since become available—largely through the industry of the hon. gentleman himself—were not put before the Court. Very well, as it is stated on the authority of the hon. member for Algoma, that such information is still open for consideration, I do not really think that the admitted authority of the Arbitrators ought to induce this House to abstain from further enquiry and investigation. The hon. member, I think, very unfairly insinuates that the action of the right hon. gentleman who leads the Government is dictated by the circumstance that the Arbitration was initiated by the gentleman who preceded him in power. I am quite