

have done so, and that you could not expect any fair play at our hands. This alone should be a sufficient reason why I humbly believe I should not be called upon to accept a Commission from the Government of which you are the head, after your public declaration, made in my absence, of my unfitness to perform what the Commission would impose on me.

"I have the honour, &c.,
(Signed) "A. A. DORION,

"To the Right Honourable Sir J. A. Macdonald."

"SIR,

"Montreal, July 3.

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd inst., enclosing a copy of a letter addressed by you to the Hon. Mr. Cameron, as Chairman of the Pacific Railway Inquiry Committee. I cannot agree in your statement that the acceptance of a Royal Commission would enable the Committee to proceed with the inquiry and the examination of witnesses on oath. The Committee is, I believe, unanimously of opinion that the acceptance of the Commission would not enable the committee to make progress, and that the action of the Commissioners (whether or not they be the same persons as those who constitute the Committee) would be entirely disconnected from the action of the Committee. Sharing their opinion, I am called on to consider whether I should accept the offer made by the Government, of a Royal Commission addressed to the gentlemen who happen to be members of the Committee, calling on them to inquire into the matters of charge preferred in the statement of Mr. Huntington. I believe that it would be of evil consequence to create the precedent of a Government issuing a Commission of Inquiry into matters of a charge against itself, the Commissioners being, as they are, subject to the direction and control of the accused. I believe that the acceptance of such a Commission would be opposed to the sense of the House of Commons, as manifested by its action last Session, and would, under present circumstances, be calculated to prejudice the inquiry ordered by the House, and to impair the full and efficient exercise of its most ancient and important powers. The House of Commons does not, I think, expect that the Crown or anyone else, least of all the members of its own Committee, will interpose between itself and the great inquiry which it has undertaken. Apart from these and other difficulties, you have yourself interposed a barrier to my acceptance of your offer. During my absence from the House of Commons last Session, you stated in your place that I had done wrong in not declining to fulfil the duty of Committeeman, which had been imposed on me by the House; that English statesmen in my position—which, however, you misstated—would have scorned to do as I had done, and that my speeches during the Session showed that your Government could not expect fair play from me on the inquiry. I shall not condescend to reply to these statements, but I have to say that, although I reluctantly came to the conclusion that I was not free to decline to serve the House of which I am a member, I do not think it consistent with my self-respect to accept the Commission here offered by a Minister who has chosen to so characterize my conduct. I have sent a copy of this letter to Mr. Cameron, for his information as Chairman of the Committee.

"I have, &c.,
(Signed) "EDWARD BLAKE.

"The Right Hon. Sir Jno. A. Macdonald."

I do not presume to question for a moment the propriety of the course adopted by these gentlemen. As Members of the House of Commons, they may have had a more acute appreciation of their Parliamentary obligations than had occurred to my apprehension,—but I trust that your Lordship will not consider that I acted wrongly in thus endeavouring to forward the inquiry by what I considered an opportune expedient.

The Committee being thus precluded from swearing in their witnesses, a motion was made by Mr. Dorion, supported by Mr. Blake, that they should content themselves with unsworn testimony, but the majority considering themselves debarred from this course by the express instructions of the House upon the point, they determined to adjourn until the 13th of August.

This resolution was taken on the 3rd of July. The day after there appeared in the 'Montreal Herald,' a series of letters and telegrams written by Sir Hugh Allan to a Mr. McMullen, and to a Mr. Smith of Chicago, and to some unknown person in the United States in reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway. The day following a long statement