

of the hon. member for South Norfolk. That was the only point in its record that he could find to entitle it to any consideration from him. Another objection taken by a gentleman who prefers to be governed by a law four or five hundred years old—the Minister of Public Works—was that, though there was jurisdiction to examine witnesses under oath, Parliament must know the names of the witnesses, and must consider, in every case, whether these witnesses shall or shall not be thus examined. Another objection, taken by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, is that this motion shall not be passed at all, but if there is any case sought to be made, it must, first of all, pass through the crucial test of the Public Accounts Committee, which must make the recommendation to this House to sanction further enquiry, and then this House shall proceed to consider the question. The last of the objections was that taken by the Minister of Finance, that the Public Accounts Committee is nothing but a committee of audit. That is the tenor of the argument of the hon. Minister of Finance. These are the various objections, so far as they have been given to the public; but, singular to say, though the objections were cut away one by one, the hon. gentlemen, who had severally brought them forward, were still able to agree with the majority, for unknown reasons, in preventing inquiry. The first question is that of jurisdiction. Upon that point to-day there is no possible doubt. It is true that, by the British North America Act, there was no jurisdiction such as is sought to be exercised to-day. That was remedied by an Imperial Act passed in the session of 1875. I may say that the question came up out of the consideration of an Act passed by this Parliament in 1873, which Act I now quote, chapter 1, Statutes of 1873, and the first section of which reads as follows:—

Whenever any witness or witnesses is or are to be examined by any committee of the Senate or House of Commons, and the Senate or House of Commons shall have resolved that it is desirable that such witness or witnesses shall be examined upon oath, such witness or witnesses shall be examined on oath or affirmation, when affirmation is allowed by law—

And the Act prescribes penalties. Now, that Act was passed in order to meet the case of a contemplated inquiry into the Pacific Scandal. It was disallowed by the Imperial authorities on the ground that it exceeded the then jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada. But subsequently the Imperial Parliament, in the session of 1875, passed an enabling Act, repealing our old section 18 of the British North America Act, and passed another Act giving full authority to the Parliament of Canada to delegate such powers, as are here sought for, to any of the committees of the House. The Parliament of Canada, in the exercise of the power so conferred on it, proceeded to legislate in that direction, and you will find the law on the subject in the Revised Statutes of Canada, chapter 11, section 21. (This section is verbatim a copy of the words used in the Statutes of 1873, which were adopted in anticipation of a threatened inquiry. We must assume that the gentlemen who took part in the framing of that Act intended it to apply to the examination of witnesses whose names were not known at