

possible to reach the object which we all have in view. I will not say at this moment that my hon. friend is perhaps hypercritical. I will simply say that all his observations will be carefully reported to the Minister of Justice for his advice; for I am sure that my hon. friend does not expect me to be prepared at this moment to give an answer, yea or nay, to all his suggestions. All I can say at present is that his suggestions will be conveyed to the Minister of Justice who must be our guide in these matters, and who will determine whether they are acceptable or unacceptable. There are one or two points, however, raised by my hon. friend to which I would briefly refer. With regard to payment of witnesses, this is not a question that comes within the scope of the commission; but it is our intention to ask for an ample appropriation from parliament to meet all the expenses of the commission. There is one suggestion of my hon. friend which I doubt that it will be proper for the government to accept. He said he thought the judges should be instructed to communicate with himself and with myself as to the counsel who are to be appointed. For my part, I have some hesitation about agreeing to this suggestion. We have thought it best, in the framing of this commission, to make the instructions as wide and ample as possible, and not to restrict the eminent gentlemen who are to form the commission, nor to advise them as to how they should discharge their duties. We thought two counsel should be appointed to assist them in the investigation; but we thought it best not to give them any advice as to the particular gentlemen whom they should employ. We thought it preferable to leave that to themselves; and for my part, I may say to my hon. friend that it never entered my mind that I should in any way communicate with the commissioners and tell them that I hoped or desired that Mr. So-and-so would be employed. We thought it better—and I think my hon. friend on reflection will agree with us—that on this point we should trust to the judgment and discretion of the commission. They know the object for which this commission has been appointed. Apart from the instructions which have been given to them within the four corners of the commission, they know what has taken place in this parliament, and they know that the object not only of this parliament, on both sides, but of the country, is to ferret out the system which I am afraid has too long prevailed, and expose it, and make its recurrence absolutely impossible. Under these circumstances we have thought that if we were to offer any advice to the commissioners as to how they should discharge their duties, or as to the appointment of counsel or the registrar or any of the officials, we should perhaps, while desiring to serve a good object, rather detract from the confidence which on all hands ought to be

reposed in this commission. What I say with regard to the appointment of counsel applies also to the last suggestion of my hon. friend, that the commissioners should commence by inquiring into the Brockville and West Huron elections. I doubt whether I should accept that suggestion of my hon. friend. I think we should rather give free scope to the eminent gentlemen who have been selected for this commission, and leave them to approach their task absolutely unfettered with any suggestion whatever, and in the way they think best adapted to meet the justice of the case, and to serve the object for which they are appointed. I have only these observations to offer to my hon. friend at the present time. As to these points I do not know that we are prepared to agree to my hon. friend's suggestions. As to the others, I shall be only too happy to refer them to the Minister of Justice for his consideration, and at a future day I will give my hon. friend the answer.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Halifax). Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER. I would suggest that the hon. leader of the opposition put himself in order by moving the adjournment of the House.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. After what the right hon. gentleman has said, I do not expect an immediate answer; but I think my hon. friend from Halifax (Mr. Borden) merely desires to make a suggestion which I am sure the right hon. gentleman will be glad to hear.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I merely wished to make a suggestion, because the right hon. First Minister said that he was going to convey the suggestions of the leader of the opposition to the Minister of Justice, and I would like to have my suggestion brought to his attention at the same time. Chapter 114 of the Revised Statutes provides that no witness shall be compelled to answer any question by his answer to which he might render himself liable to a criminal prosecution. I suppose that has already been brought to the attention of the Minister of Justice; and, as the leader of the opposition points out, that is not a provision which would be very suitable to a government commission of this kind. It may be suggested that any difficulty with regard to that is removed by chapter 31 of 56 Vict., passed in 1893, the Canada Evidence Act. With regard to that, in the first place it is doubtful whether the words, 'criminal proceedings, civil proceedings and other matters respecting which the parliament of Canada has jurisdiction,' would apply to a commission of this kind, because the words 'other matters' might be restricted by a well-known rule of construction to matters other than commissions of this kind. Further than that, this Act of 1893 does not contain any repealing clause

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.