

of this Royal Commission. There is, however, another Royal Commission of which we do not hear anything in this document, although I venture to say that it has attracted a larger share of attention, and its operations have been watched with very much greater interest than even the Royal Commission on the subject of the Civil Service of which we know little, and, I suspect, a larger part of the population care less. Now, as to this Commission of which we do not hear anything, it is said that it was issued; and it contains upon the face of it, the averment that it was issued to enquire into allegations or charges made on the floor of Parliament, in reference to certain matters connected with the Pacific Railway. It is said, indeed, that it is not confined to such allegations, but that it expressly embraces in its terms, as one of the material grounds for the issue of an enquiry and for the subject matter of an enquiry, allegations made in this House. I take the earliest opportunity of, for my part, protesting, as I have before protested, upon the occasion of the issue of a Royal Commission of enquiry, into other transactions connected with the Pacific Railway, against any such action on the part of the advisers of the Crown. I believe that to be in fact, and in substance, a serious attack, not upon the dignity, for which I do not care much, but upon the independence of Parliament. I believe that charges which are made here are not to be taken up by the Crown unless communicated by the Crown to this House. I believe that what passes here is to be known there only when we choose it shall be known, and I believe that charges we make here are to be enquired into either by us or by machinery by us constituted, not by machinery constituted independent of Parliament by the advisers of the Crown. And, so far as we may judge from the course pursued in this investigation it seems to me to go far beyond the legitimate objects of such a Commission. Such a Commission may properly be issued in order to inform the minds of the advisers of the Crown, and through them the Crown, of facts of which they are ignorant, or in order to investigate the causes, not, in my opinion, when they go so far as crime, but causes, at any rate, short of crime—of the management or mismanagement by subordinate officers of the departments—in order, in a word, to inform the minds of Ministers of things of which they ought to be informed with a view to the proper conduct of the business of the country; but I believe it to be wholly beyond the scope of such a Commission to entertain questions of public policy, political questions, still less do I believe it to be within the proper scope of such a Commission to enter into the question of the particular connection of Ministers of the present or past Government with such questions. These are beyond the domain of such Commissions; they are high and important matters of State to be disposed of by Parliament, or by machinery which Parliament shall devise. They are not departmental matters; they are not oftentimes on questions of fact, they are matters of policy or political questions, with reference to which the confidence of the people of this country may be given or withheld. There is yet another objection, from my point of view, to such questions being entertained by such a Commission. It is contrary to the very first principles of reason and justice that men should appoint their own judges. It is contrary to the very first principles of reason and justice that men should appoint judges for their own adversaries. Both these principles are violated by the appointment of a Commission which we see summons before it Ministers and Ex-Ministers, and calls upon them to purge themselves upon oath as to whether they have been guilty of acts of corruption, or of being personally interested in contracts. I believe that these accusations, if they are to be made here, are to be made on the responsibility of the member, and should be prosecuted according to the machinery which Parliament shall devise, and that there is no justice, no precedent, no

Mr. BLAKE.

reason or fair dealing in the arrangements which, in this case, have been made. Who are these appointed to enquire into these subjects, and what are their instructions? We know that Royal Commissioners are bound to act according to the instructions they may receive from time to time; we know that the Crown is entitled to give them instructions, which means the Ministers. Whether the Ministers gave instructions or not, I do not know; but there is no positive rule as to the manner in which these instructions are to be received, or the manner in which they may be communicated. We do not know whether the hon. the Minister of Railways may not, by Order in Council, have up his chief Commissioner every morning in the Department to point out what line of enquiry he should take or what questions he should ask; but, at any rate, when he made a Junior County Court Judge one, an Assistant-Commissioner of Revenue, another, an occasional employee of the Government, a third, and a defeated candidate for a constituency in his interest, the secretary, he has a tribunal very apt to do the work he wants it to do, and which may be doing it, not exactly according to his taste, but still fairly well. Hon. members on this side have no reason to complain about any Commission under any circumstances, but it is our bounden duty to protest against proceedings which might, under other circumstances, be productive of wrong and injustice, and which are based on a violation of the rules of equity. What is wanted in this case is a full enquiry. How is that to be secured? It is to be secured, as we know in all cases involving political considerations, by having both sides represented. That is what is done on the other side of the water when commissions are issued, even though they do not involve questions of political enquiry. These commissioners are not one sided. They are, as a rule, composed of prominent men from the ranks of both parties. Still more, if you are going to have a political enquiry, which is to end in the whitewashing or condemnation of one side or the other, if it is to be an enquiry of this transcendent importance, should not both sides be represented in order that all questions may be asked, all evidence elicited in full, and that the great tribunal of public opinion, and this House, may have the largest amount of material from which to draw its own conclusions? I have never cared much for the findings of such tribunals. What I have been always anxious for is, that they should be so constituted that the facts should be got out, and the facts being got out, let us form our own judgments. Without entering at all upon a discussion of the proceedings of that Commission, or its revelations, and confining my observations, as I have confined them, to the questions of policy and to the constitutional questions involved in the question of such a Commission, I may say that, in my opinion, not merely what has there taken place, but what has taken place and been made public in other ways, and, antecedent to the appointment of that Commission, point to the necessity of some further action on the part of Parliament. I believe, Sir, that the time has arrived at which we ought to take some steps to put an end to the system of contract-broking. I believe the time has arrived at which we shall best consult our own dignity and standing with the public by placing further restrictions on the right of members of Parliament to act as agents of suitors before departments and the Government for favors of any kind. I impute no unworthy conduct to any member on this occasion, either expressedly or impliedly, but I say that when such transactions as those stated have been made public, when you find it obvious that an impression prevails in the minds of those who are desirous to negotiate with the Government that they can do better by getting the assistance of Mr. So-and-So, because he is a member of Parliament, it is time that such a thing should be put an end to once and forever, and that for profit or reward, at any rate, none of us should be able to intervene in departmental or executive matters any more than we are able to intervene on matters which are dependent in either House of Parlia-