

the majority to take place *sub silentio*, with a view to the packing of a House with their own adherents on the day to which it had adjourned, an operation to them exceptionally easy, as the Parliamentary strength of the Ministers lies principally in the maritime and out-lying Provinces, while their own is close at home in the central region of Ontario and Quebec. The subsequent publication in the newspapers of the documents now known as the Allan and McMullen correspondence is pointed to as having been a move in aid of the same unworthy policy, by supplying a sudden and unexpected pretext for insisting on the immediate intervention of Parliament at a time when the Ministerial supporters were dispersed.

I do not, however, myself attach the slightest credit to this injurious insinuation. Although, undoubtedly, party strife is conducted in this country with less reticence and generosity than at home, and although the combatants "strike below the waistcoat" more frequently than could be wished, my personal knowledge of the leaders of the Opposition convinces me that such a design would be quite foreign to their natures. My own opinion is, that, from first to last, they found themselves impeded by the initial mistake in tactics—as I ventured at the time to consider it—committed by Mr. Huntington in not re-enforcing his motion by the production of some of the documents on which it was founded. Had he done so, Parliament would undoubtedly have listened to him with greater respect, and Mr. Dorion's motion might perhaps have been carried: for though Mr. Huntington's case is far from being proved, no one can now deny that if he was in possession of the Allan correspondence at the time he demanded his Committee, he had a right to require an investigation of the suspicious circumstances thus brought to his knowledge. The premature disclosure of his hand could not have been the objection, for a sufficiency of "*pièces justificatives*" for his purpose have since been produced. As it was, he could not convince the House of the urgency of the affair, and discouraged by their repeated defeats, the Opposition, I imagine, gave up all hopes of being able to persuade Parliament to dispute the arrangements of the triumphant Minister. Be that as it may, it is certain that the day after the adjournment, most of the members of both Houses dispersed themselves in different directions, some to their homes, some to the States, and some to Europe, without any more intention of returning to Ottawa, on the 13th of August, than myself.

On the 2nd July, Mr. Cameron's Committee met in Montreal, but in the meantime I had received an intimation from your Lordship that the Oaths Bill had been disallowed by the Queen in Council, and I had made the fact public by Proclamation.

Immediately on receipt of this intelligence, communications had passed between Sir John Macdonald and myself as to the course to be pursued. Sir John was inclined to issue a Commission to the members of the Committee, but as he hesitated to do so from an unwillingness to expose the Crown to the rejection of its mandate, I addressed him in the following terms:—

"The Citadel, Quebec, June 28, 1873.

"I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th. I am sure you are quite right not to allow the Committee to be postponed beyond the time originally fixed for the opening of its proceedings.

"On the part of the Crown, I should have no objection to the offer of the Commission as you propose, and I think you may with perfect propriety act upon the presumption that the members of the Committee will accept the charge confided to them.

"The Government has stretched its legal conscience and encouraged Parliament, though not without warning, to exceed its legitimate powers in order to facilitate this inquiry. The obstacle now interposed is one with which you have no concern, and beyond your control. You propose to obviate the difficulty by the only means in your power—but a means both legitimate and effectual. No one can doubt that for the purpose for which the Committee was originally constituted, its conversion into a Commission can make no practical difference. As a Commission it will take evidence, and as a Committee it will report upon that evidence to the House. It would be unreasonable to allege that in discharging this double function, and in acquiring in addition to the powers delegated to it by Parliament, a technical authority at the hands of the Crown to take evidence on oath, it abates one tittle of its constitutional independence."

Thus authorized, Sir John communicated with Mr. Cameron in the following letter:—

"SIR,

"Montreal, July 2, 1873.

"As the Act which would have enabled the Committee now sitting in Montreal, of which you are Chairman, to examine witnesses on oath has been disallowed, as being beyond the competence of the Canadian Parliament, I desire to renew to you, as Chair-