

that this evidence was very bulky, that a great deal of it was irrelevant. Well, is it to be supposed that any importance could be given by this commission to such evidence? Does any one wish to give importance to irrelevant evidence? Will they not be able to sift that as well as the evidence that may be produced before them? And all this talk about bringing witnesses is met fully by machinery in the courts adopted every day in connection with the most important matters. Where, for instance, you have witnesses at a distance, witnesses who are dead, witnesses that cannot be got, you may by commission obtain all that evidence; and here is evidence obtained by a commission at great cost, ready at hand. At one time the argument of expenditure was dwelt on by the Minister of Railways and Canals. I think it was stated that this evidence had cost \$10,000. Now, we have a proposition that this evidence shall cost \$10,000 more, and that that money shall be absolutely wasted, that that evidence taken shall under no circumstances, be used by this commission. I think the public will see through that just about as quickly as this House. We certainly can see through it without much difficulty.

Now, the hon. gentleman referred to the scope of this commission, and if there be anything in it, there remains nothing but the extraordinary objection that they will not accept a suggestion in this matter from the opposition. Well, I hope the public will take note of that. We have got down to this condition of things, that the government are afraid to take a suggestion from the opposition lest it might be supposed that it was forced on them by the opposition. Now, what is the position of the government in regard to the suggestion by the leader of the opposition? The Minister of Railways and Canals endeavoured to show by a reference to two or three lines of that commission that it covered not merely the fact of a corrupt act—it undoubtedly does that. For instance, the stuffing of a ballot box is covered. But the point, if I understand the leader of the opposition, is this; It may be, from the language used as to that, that as soon as it is proved that a corrupt act has been committed and there has been a switching or stuffing of ballots by John B, you may not call the evidence to show that John C combined with John B to do this criminal and improper act, that you may not show that there was an organization, for instance, for carrying out a crime. And how can this commission report on what we desire to be investigated, so as to guard ourselves against the repetition of the methods of an organization which is corrupt and criminal? Is there any danger that by this language they will be confined and consider themselves confined to acts themselves and nothing else. Now, for instance, supposing the hon. Postmaster General (Mr. Mulock), and the hon.

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acting Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sutherland), had undoubtedly conspired with these men to go into all these rascalities, had paid them for their wrong-doing, and actively engaged them in all these schemes, is there any language that would permit the judges, if it were established that wrong had been done, to go beyond merely that wrongful act?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Undoubtedly.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I do not think so, and I will give you my reasons.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Undoubtedly.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The hon. Minister of Railways (Mr. Blair) gave us two or three words, in which he argued that the language was sufficient, and he said that there was here power enough to cover the widest scope suggested by the amendment of the hon. leader of the opposition, but he would not adopt it lest it should be said that the hon. leader of the opposition had forced this upon the government. The commission begins by reciting that in elections:

Frauds were committed by returning officers, deputy returning officers or other parties in several of the electoral districts either while the votes were being polled or thereafter by the spoiling of the ballots marked by the electors—

That is one case.

—or by the fraudulent substitution of other ballots for those so marked—

That is another case.

—or by other fraudulent conduct in respect of the ballots at any time before and up to the return of the writ.

That is another case. All this is the language read by the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals. These are the only cases in which the language is specific.

The PRIME MINISTER. Read on.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER (reading):

And it being most desirable—

The PRIME MINISTER. No, that is not it.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I am reading the language of this commission, because I cannot follow the construction which the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals put upon it:

And it being most desirable that all such alleged frauds should be investigated, and the recurrence thereof, if any, prevented—

That is where I would look primarily for the scope.

The PRIME MINISTER. But, my hon. friend did not read it all:

—or by reason of any fraudulent conduct—