

“(whether or not they be the same persons as those who constitute the Committee) would be entirely disconnected from the action of the Committee. Sharing their opinion, I am called on to consider whether I should accept the offer made by the Government, of a Royal Commission addressed to the gentlemen who happen to be members of the Committee, calling on them to enquire into the matters of charge preferred in the statement of Mr. *Huntington*. I believe that it would be of evil consequence to create the precedent of a Government issuing a Commission of enquiry into matters of a charge against itself, the Commissioners, being as they are, subject to the direction and control of the accused. I believe that the acceptance of such a Commission would be opposed to the sense of the House of Commons, as manifested by its action last Session, and would, under present circumstances, be calculated to prejudice the enquiry ordered by the House, and to impair the full and efficient exercise of its most ancient and important powers. The House of Commons, does not, I think, expect that the Crown or any one else, least of all the Members of its own Committee, will interpose between itself and the great enquiry which it has undertaken. Apart from these and other difficulties, you have yourself interposed a barrier to my acceptance of your offer. During my absence from the House of Commons last Session, you stated in your place that I had done wrong in not declining to fulfil the duty of Committeeman, which had been imposed on me by the House, that English statesmen in my position—which, however, you mis-stated—would have scorned to do as I had done, and that my speeches during the Session showed that your Government could not expect fair play from me on the enquiry. I shall not condescend to reply to these statements, but I have to say that although I reluctantly came to the conclusion, that I was not free to decline to serve the House of which I am a Member, I do not think it consistent with my self-respect to accept the Commission here offered by a Minister, who has chosen to so characterize my conduct. I have sent a copy of this letter to Mr. *Cameron* for his information as Chairman of the Committee.

“I have, &c.

(Signed)

“EDWARD BLAKE.

“The Right Hon. Sir Jno. A. Macdonald.”

I do not presume to question for a moment the propriety of the course adopted by these gentlemen. As Members of the House of Commons, they may have had a more acute appreciation of their Parliamentary obligations than had occurred to my apprehension,—but I trust that Your Lordship will not consider that I acted wrongly in thus endeavouring to forward the enquiry by what I considered an opportune expedient.

The Committee being thus precluded from swearing in their witnesses, a motion was made by Mr. *Dorion* supported by Mr. *Blake*, that they should content themselves with unsworn testimony, but the majority considering themselves debarred from this course by the express instructions of the House upon the point, they determined to adjourn until the 13th of August.

This resolution was taken on the 3rd of July. The day after there appeared in the *Montreal Herald*, a series of letters and telegrams written by Sir *Hugh Allan* to a Mr. *McMullen*, and to a Mr. *Smith* of Chicago, and to some unknown person in the United States in reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway. The day following a long statement on the same subject in the form of an affidavit was issued by Sir *Hugh Allan* in another newspaper. I have already had the honour of forwarding to Your Lordship both these documents, but I think it well to append them to this despatch for convenience of reference. It is not necessary for my present purpose that I should either analyse or contrast the conflicting assertions observable in these productions. It will be sufficient to note that not only does Sir *Hugh Allan* admit upon oath that the language of his letters is “inaccurate” but he also denies in the most positive manner the