

remarks I made if he will consult *Hansard*, which is generally very correct.

Then, as to the question of examining witnesses as to how they voted, I must express my great surprise at the decision arrived at in view of the evidence that we have before us, that the government have now in their possession. The gravamen of the charge in the Huron election rests upon the right of the electors to testify how they voted, and the right hon. gentleman, knowing that the whole case rests to a large extent upon that fact—I am surprised that there should be any hesitation in passing an Act that would enable the judges to ask the witness how he voted. The Committee on Privileges and Elections ruled that as the seat was not affected, and as it is not proposed to affect a seat by the decision of these judges, the case would be exactly in the same position as it was before the Committee on Privileges and Elections, on which my hon. friend has an absolute majority, and which ruled that in order to have any proper investigation it was absolutely necessary that witnesses should be permitted to state how they voted. Yet that is, for some reason best known to my hon. friend and to the government, refused, although it is the very first step towards getting a prompt and searching investigation, the very first step towards discovering the ground upon which frauds in the West Huron election to a large extent rest. My right hon. friend knows that in one case in which forty men voted for a Conservative candidate, there were only thirty ballots found in the ballot box, and it would be utterly impossible to reach that fraud unless these men tell how they voted, and unless they do this, it is absolutely impossible to expose the fraud, and you break down the whole machinery by which a pure election can be held. My right hon. friend knows that the testimony of at least forty men—and an hon. gentleman beside me says there were more than forty—had gone in before the Committee on Privileges and Elections, their sworn and solemn testimony confirmed on cross-examination; and I say that under these circumstances it would appear that one of the objects in removing this matter from the Committee on Privileges and Elections, which had ruled that such questions should be asked, and given to a Royal Commission, is to get rid of that evidence, and prevent testimony being given that has been proved to be absolutely necessary in order to expose one of the most scandalous transactions that has taken place in the case of the West Huron election.

I am also surprised that any question should arise, in order to expedite this matter, as to the sworn testimony taken before the Committee on Privileges and Elections being utilized in the present case. Why should it not be utilized? Is there any reason why this testimony should not be used? Every person knows the immense

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difficulty of bringing a hundred or more witnesses before a court; and when it is remembered that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Sir Louis Davies) and the junior member for Halifax (Mr. Russell) and the Solicitor General (Mr. Fitzpatrick) declared that the result of that investigation was not to establish anything that would materially affect the gentlemen on the other side of the House and the party with which they are connected, it is the more strange that the judges are not to be permitted to use that testimony which, at great public expense and enormous inconvenience to the public, had been procured. Their sworn testimony is on record, and why should it not be used as sworn testimony is used when it is transferred from a committee of one session of this House to a committee of another session? I must say that I am greatly disappointed to think that the extremely moderate and reasonable suggestions which I ventured to make to my hon. friend, have all been thrown over. It would seem that instead of my right hon. friend being anxious to implement the pledges that he gave to this House to promote a thorough and searching investigation, the object now appears to be to get rid of an investigation at all that will be of any value, and to cripple and confine the commissioners in such a way as to prevent witnesses from testifying in the same way they had testified in the first place, because they are not to receive the indemnity that the Imperial Act gives to witnesses under similar circumstances, and they are not permitted to give the testimony that, under the decision of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, they have already been allowed to give. Therefore, that is another reason. I suppose, why this investigation is to be crippled and hampered by restrictions that are calculated to prevent its having the effect that is desired.

Now, I drew my right hon. friend's attention to another thing, and that was the desirability of taking the Brockville and West Huron elections first. I did not catch what decision he has arrived at with reference to that matter.

The PRIME MINISTER. I did not speak of that. I said the other day that upon this matter as well as others, the government did not feel justified in giving any instructions to the judges, but preferred to leave them to conduct the inquiry as they saw fit.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. My right hon. friend seems to forget that the reason of this commission being issued is because one of the most frightful scandals has taken place, being an attempt to deprive the electors of this country of their independent franchise, and to substitute spurious members, returned by a gang of ruffians who invaded the constituency and tampered with ballot boxes, who switched ballots, stole ballots, substituted ballots; and this commis-