

do desire to guard these precedents, which ought to serve us for guides in the future (*Applause*).

Let me add an instance which serves to show the fallacy of the hon. gentleman's argument. He says, on one part, the prerogative was dangerous because it was used by the Crown. The most dangerous instances of the exercise of the prerogative we have known, which have conflicted with the interests of the people, have been abuses of the prerogative by Ministers. (*Hear, hear.*)

In the time of Charles the Duke of Buckingham was impeached, and that impeachment had gone a certain distance when a Select Committee, consisting of the most eminent men, was appointed to prepare articles of charge. Some of the articles had been prepared. The impeached Minister used in that Committee, as the hon. gentleman had used in this Committee, the prerogative of the Crown to stay the hand of the Commons. The impeached Minister induced the Sovereign hurriedly to prorogue the House and stay the hand of his accusers. Sir, what happened immediately afterwards? Two days later the Committee of the Commons, who had been appointed to prepare the charges, received a message from the law officer of the Crown, the Attorney General, requesting their attendance. They attended, and a request was made to them. Let me read you the answer these eminent men returned. "Whereas, this morning, when we attended upon a commandment from Her Majesty, signed by yourself, you gave us an intimation of a purpose of Her Majesty to have a proceeding in the Star Chamber against the Duke of Buckingham, of such matters as he stood charged with in Parliament, and to that end required to be instructed what proofs we had to maintain the several charges prepared from the Commons to the Lords against the said Duke, and according to your advice have considered thereof together and entreat you to take knowledge that whatsoever was done by us in that business was done by the command of the House of Commons, and by their direction some proofs were delivered to the Lords with the charges; but what other proofs the House would have used according to the liberty reserved to themselves, either for the maintenance of the charges of upon the reply, we neither know nor can we undertake to inform you. Elliott, Pym, Glanville, Selden and others."

Not satisfied with that, the impeached Minister advised the King to have Sir John Elliott taken before the Privy Council, where they endeavoured to extort answers with regard to the evidence. Sir John Elliott responded that what he had learned he learned only in the House for the service of that House, and not except for its service would he make use of that information. The proceedings in the Star Chamber went on and were entirely of a sham character, and sham results took place, and there was an end to the attempt made in those evil days by an impeached Minister to use the prerogative for the purpose of transferring from the House the accusation made against himself.

And yet the hon. gentleman says, notwithstanding the objection to its constitutionality, notwithstanding the absence of precedent, notwithstanding immensely greater objections, that the Commission moved for by the Minister himself, especially for the trial of himself, that this Commission is a legal one. The Commission is to

be tried by its works. I think these works will result in the verdict given when that question came up before us.

I think the hon. member for Cardwell (Hon. Mr. Cameron) during the last session pointed out the difficulties that would arise from a Commission being appointed. He expressed strong objections to it, as it would remove this matter out of the hands of the Commons, and a feeling of joy on learning that the right hon. gentleman had yielded to the general view. I think, Sir, these observations have been more than fortified by the result, and I expect to find that the hon. gentlemen will not withdraw from this position. I expect to find him maintaining the inexpediency of any such transfer as that which has taken place.

I maintain that there exists evidence to show that this Commission was eminently unsatisfactory. Questions were put by the Commissioners that ought not in many instances to have been put in the mode in which they were. A witness, for instance on being questioned respecting the payment of \$20,000, instead of sifting the witness to the bottom, the Commissioner said to him, "I suppose you signed it inadvertently," and the witness adopted the suggestion and adopted the means of escape which the Commissioner gave him. Although the newspapers gave this question and answer, the question is omitted in the report before Parliament, and it appears to be a voluntary expression of the witness.

Again, leading questions of a most objectionable character were permitted to be put, and amongst these I will give you one instance. One witness, a Mr. White, I think, after giving evidence relating to the large expenditure in Montreal on the part of the Opposition, had the question put to him:—"You were out-bought in fact?" and the answer was, "I cannot say I was, we were out-bought." That question was a most objectionable one, but the witness would not take the question, which he found was also omitted in the evidence place on the table of the House. These are samples from a large mass of improprieties which could be brought forward.

The opinion shared by all in this country, and, I am satisfied, entertained by the majority of this House, is that the disclosures of the Commission are such as call for the instant action of Parliament. The disclosures which were made were such as to require at the earliest moment possible that the question should be submitted, and the sense of the House taken upon it. In that spirit, in that view, was the motion of my friend from Lambton (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) made, abandoning nothing, for it censures the course as well as the disclosures, not recognizing the legality of the Commission; yet we find the case so strong, so plain, that we would have been recreant to our duty if we had hesitated to place in your hands a motion upon which the sense of the House may be taken; and although the hon. gentleman rambled from one subject to another in his discourse, and touched upon topics wholly irrelevant, yet he failed altogether to touch what my hon. friend proposed to this House as the real root of this matter.

It had been known in this country before the late elections that bribery had assumed alarming proportions. It had been known that