

for when the Hon. George Brown entered the Government of John A. Macdonald he had done this. There had been a great many of these charges against public men, and outside they had had the effect of poisoning the public mind against those gentlemen, which was to be regretted, but he held that they ought not to allow what the Government had done in this case to be established as a precedent. If it were so established, as he had no doubt it would be, for the Government had a majority at their backs, it might in the future be used against those who had set up the precedent. He considered it wrong for any candidate to use the influence he might possess to compel a large number of men to vote for him, but if it were wrong for a candidate to do this, was it not much more so for a Government to do it. He claimed that there had not been a reform up to this time which the Conservative party had not obtained, including the settlement of the Clergy Reserves question; but said the Opposition only wanted the Government to act on those principles of purity they had professed when not in power. He did not intend to make any personal remarks with reference to the Commissioner of Public Works. He regretted that it was necessary to refer to that gentleman at all in the motion before the House. He did not wish to fix the responsibility for what had been done in this matter on the hon. Commissioner alone, for he believed that the other members of the Government were equally responsible with him.

Mr. SINCLAIR said the duty of the House was to examine the evidence adduced before this Committee upon this subject. What was the effect of that evidence? The Commissioner of Public Works admitted that he wrote the letter authorizing the foreman on the Central Prison works to give the employes a half-holiday on nomination day, and that they were to be given their pay. He was sorry that this had happened. He was sorry that the Commissioner of Public Works should have been misled into writing that letter. He considered that in this country the Reform Governments at Ottawa and here should take care to conduct themselves so that there should not be even the shadow of suspicion upon their actions; but he believed the Commissioner gave this direction in the simplicity of his heart, and believing that he was doing nothing wrong. There was an impression abroad, and he believed with good ground, that there had been a great deal of corruption in connection with elections in this country. Those who professed the principles of the Reform party had led the van in opposing it; they had spoken strongly against it, and for these reasons he thought it was unfortunate that the Commissioner should have done anything which would be liable to be misunderstood or misrepresented. But while he said this much he would also say that, although he considered it the duty of every hon. member to do what was best in the interest of the country, and in the cause of purity of election, there was likewise a duty which they owed to individuals. For his own part, he might say that he knew the Commissioner of Public Works intimately from the time this Parliament had an existence. He had believed him to be a thoroughly honest man, and no man in the House had been subjected to more remorseless persecution than he had been. He had been charged on the floor of Parliament with doing that outside of Parliament which was dishonest and base without the shadow being given in evidence of the charge. (Hear, hear.) There was an evident and sinister determination on the part of the leaders of the Opposition to ruin the hon. gentleman, not only in his public, but in his private character. He did not believe that there was the shadow of a foundation for the charges formulated against the hon. gentleman with reference to the Elgin Frauds, or the alleged Emigration irregularities. The hon. gentleman had been grievously wronged, and injured privately and publicly in consequence of these slanders, and had his conduct been subjected to the decision of any competent tribunal in this country, he believed he would have been pronounced to be entirely without blame. (Hear, hear.) He (Mr. Sinclair) had now listened to the Proton Outrage discussion a good many times, and he must say that there was not a tittle of evidence produced before the Committee which tended to show that the hon. gentleman had been guilty of any corrupt action in that connection. (Hear, hear.) The name of the Commissioner had been held up by hon. gentlemen upon this side of the House for reprobation, charges of wrong were from time to time flung across the floor at him, and yet not a syllable of evidence was produced to show that there was foundation for those charges. Nothing was too mean to

descend to if it only had the likelihood of injuring him, and canoes, card tables, and such like things were made to do services for the gentlemen of the Opposition. Such charges as these were beneath contempt, and should never have been brought upon the floor of this House. Now, he was not willing that the good fame and private character of the hon. gentleman should be sacrificed at this time; he was not willing by any vote of his to give the country to understand that any of the charges which had been bandied across the floor of this House against the Commissioner of Public Works were worthy of any degree of credit. If hon. gentlemen could only induce this House to vote for this resolution, they would not fail to impress upon the people that it was impossible that any man so long and so intimately connected with the public affairs of this country could be censured unless the representatives of the people believed him guilty of some further wrong than the mere giving of a holiday to the men at the Central Prison. Although he was as ready as any member of this House to do anything which would prevent the very semblance of corruption, he was not willing to sacrifice the character and good name of a leading member of this House, and leading Reformer, and, he believed, a good and honest man, simply because without any alleged or inferred corrupt intention he had been unfortunate enough to fall into this small mistake. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. PAXTON said he could vote conscientiously upon this question, and vote too against the resolution of the hon. member for East Toronto. He remarked that the leading men on the Opposition benches were holding their tongues upon this occasion, apparently feeling the awkward position in which they were placed. He called attention to the fact that the instigators of this resolution were the same men who pretended to be the friends of the working-men at the West Toronto election, and who yet tried to censure a man who gave these same working-men a very small but just privilege. The Commissioner of Public Works was the only representative of the working-man in the Government, and this was the secret of the persecution to which he was subjected at the hands of the lawyers on the Opposition. They knew that the hon. gentleman had a great influence among the great body of the farmers and working-men, and that in this respect they would be gaining a great advantage over the Government if they could drive the hon. gentleman from their councils. He commented on the low standard taken by the Opposition, the time and the money of the people that was spent in discussing questions of not the least public importance, and their continual attacks upon both the public and private character of the Minister of Public Works. He reminded the Opposition of the advice given by the hon. member for Niagara, to wait until they could get something upon which they could conscientiously and wisely oppose the Government. The leader of the Opposition, who bragged so much of his honesty, had only one purpose in view, which was to get into power, and he reminded him of the circumstances connected with the hon. gentleman's defence of the murderer Wielan, and the resolution which Mr. Blake moved in the House regarding his conduct. He reminded him that the resolution was withdrawn upon that occasion, when an apology was offered by the hon. gentleman's leader, and a promise given that he would behave himself in future. He commented upon the want of policy on the part of Conservatives during all their past history, and he concluded by hoping that this would be the last effort they would make against the character of the Commissioner of Public Works, until he had done something worthy of condemnation. When they did find such cause against him, they would also find that hon. members on the Reform side of the House would be ready to rise and condemn it with one voice. (Cheers.)

Mr. LAUDER said the hon. member who just sat down was the only Government supporter who defended the action of the Commissioner of Public Works. In order, as he said, to refresh the memory of the hon. member for North Bruce, he read extracts from the evidence of Messrs. Dickey & Hellam, and he contended that the workmen went to the nomination to hoot and hiss at the beck of Mr. Hellam. He did not think, seeing that this was the case, that the hon. gentleman could defend the Commissioner of Public Works before his constituents. He contended that the newspapers of the Province in the interest of the Government, with the exception of THE GLOBE, condemned the action of the Commissioner of Public Works. The newspapers supporting hon. gentlemen opposite had been educating the