

Supply—Justice

to recognize the truth in Pascal's thought: the Leader of the Opposition is so presumptuous that he would like to be known throughout the world and even by people who will come after he is gone; and he is so vain that the esteem of five or six persons around him amuses and satisfies him.

I waited, Mr. Chairman, before reading those clippings over again; I was expecting the famous names of those famous companies, but nothing came out.

Would it not be that the hon. member for Yukon made statements too soon? Would it not be that he thought he was immunized, or at least important enough due to the results of the Dorion inquiry, so that today he is no longer justified? Did he change his mind?

It is easy to see from the way he acts now that the balloon has burst and that before long he will prove to be the greatest flop of this century.

I should like to conclude on one of Pascal's thoughts. It is above politics; there are things done on both sides without changing sides. An individual asks another:

Why do you kill me? The other answers: Do you not live on the other side of the water?

If you lived on this side, my friend, I should be a murderer, and it would be unjust to kill you. But since you live on the other side, it is just, and I am a hero.

Pascal, Mr. Chairman.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I take it upon myself to speak in this fashion precisely because in such a case as this I should have preferred to a display of political emotions and aroused passions, a reasonable and sensible discussion of the matter, so that we might be able to judge. We are sorry it was not so.

We shall try to put in practice Pascal's last thought: the side does not count, we will try to hear above the fly that buzzes in our ear, we will try to judge to the best of our ability.

● (3:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, the committee and the house have spent a good deal of time on this particular case. I think that is understandable and is right because it involves questions of national security, questions of the effectiveness in the past and the continued effectiveness in the future of our security arrangements for the protection of our state, and of our society against subversive action. This, of course, is the first duty of a government; certainly a first duty of government, and particularly of the head of a

government: To make sure that these arrangements in so far as you can make sure, are effective.

Also involved, Mr. Chairman, are questions of human rights, fundamental human rights, the rights of an individual as a citizen against unjust, and even illegal action by the state. I know that members of the committee are concerned with both aspects of this very difficult case. I should like to say if I might, Mr. Chairman, that both aspects, but more particularly one aspect, were put very forcibly before the committee in a speech a short time ago by the hon. member for York South. I appreciate the strength of his feeling. I appreciate the strength of feelings of other members, feelings hostile to the government in the way it has handled or managed this case, I appreciate the strength of this feeling and I appreciate the way in which the hon. member put it forward.

I should also like this to be known, Mr. Chairman. Naturally, I as the head of the government take the responsibility, the primary responsibility, for everything that has been done in this matter by the government. Any minister who has a particular responsibility acts only as a member of the government of which I am the head. Any action taken against the minister is naturally taken against the government and must be considered as such. In what I have said in the past and in what I am to say now, I am speaking as the head of the government, but also after consultation with the Minister of Justice who is more particularly concerned with this matter, and who might in other circumstances have been anxious to make that statement himself. But I persuaded him to let me make it.

There are those two aspects, then, of this very difficult case, when I have mentioned, Mr. Chairman, I am just as concerned with the second aspect, the rights of the individual, however humble he may be, however powerless he may be, as I am with the national security aspect.

My concern with security, of course, is the concern of someone who has the responsibility of government. My concern with the human rights aspect of the case is dual. It is the concern of a man who has the responsibility of government, but it is also the concern of an individual Canadian who believes in the freedom of the individual against the state, if necessary. I am asking the members of the committee to accept the sincerity of my views in this matter.