

be impossible to carry on with any degree of safety the affairs of government. A disregard of the honour and traditions of parliament can only bring condemnation to any government, and it must in the end bring not only utter failure but disgrace upon the government of Canada. The importance, therefore, of the maintenance of the honour of a member of parliament or of a member of the government is evident.

I find, not only from my own recollection of political affairs, but upon searching the public records of Canada, that the Canadian government has been singularly free from lapses of public rectitude. There are only a few cases on record, and I find that in all those cases—and it is only what might have been expected—neither the parliament nor the public of Canada were slow in applying punishment where the conduct of a minister or of a member called for it. In all my searching, which has been somewhat extensive, I have not found a case where upon conduct being alleged such as I intend to charge here, the investigation asked for was refused by parliament. It is therefore with a great deal of confidence that I bring this motion before the House, believing, as I do, that the precedent established by parliament will be followed in this case and that an investigation of the charges I am about to make will be granted, in order not only that the honour of parliament may be vindicated and the traditions of parliament maintained, but, that the integrity, honesty and faithfulness to office and duty on the part of the minister will be established.

The matter to which I particularly refer came to the public knowledge as long ago as the 20th of February, 1924, in an article published in the *Ottawa Journal*, in which the minister was charged with the same offence, if I may so designate it—charged with the same thing that I am about to charge him with to-day. In the *Mail and Empire* of the 29th February he was similarly charged. I do not propose to read those articles, because I do not think it would be fair or just, nor do I believe that newspaper articles are competent or sufficient evidence. I only mention these charges made through the public press to indicate to the House that the public, and that includes the minister and the government, became aware of them at that time.

The British parliament, which we are all glad to look to as our example in connection with the preservation of the dignity of parliament, the proper conduct of public affairs and many other matters, has always been very careful in preserving the dignity of that

[Mr. Porter.]

House and in seeing that the conduct of ministers of the Crown is in accord with the principles that they have laid down and have always, I believe, succeeded in following. That is one of the principles—the principle laid down by the British parliament—that I am invoking here to-day. Let me quote the words of a very eminent minister of the British government, Sir Rufus Isaacs, then Solicitor General, in this connection. He said:

If a minister should use any information which he obtains as a minister for the purpose of furthering his own interests, he is deserving of censure.

Further he says:

Whether the minister was personally wicked is not the point. The question is whether the precedent which he sets up is a bad one.

And further:

Apart from all personal motives and personal considerations, whether the facts as known to the public establish a precedent which he can safely allow to stand.

The British parliament, so far as I have been able to discover, has never undertaken to define in so many words, or in any one particular rule, what conduct shall, or what conduct shall not, constitute an infringement of that rule. It is, as has been stated in some of the discussions, a matter of the honour of a member and of the dignity of parliament, which alone is in the keeping and charge of parliament itself. No one could possibly imagine exactly what line of conduct might come before parliament in a matter of that character, and so I take it that it has been impossible, or if not impossible, that it was at least considered inadvisable, that parliament should lay down any particular rule within the four corners of which a minister or a member must come in order to merit condemnation for any action that he might be guilty of. Sir Rufus Isaacs, to whom I have referred, was himself charged with a breach of his duty as a minister of the Crown, and I might say also that in that he was charged jointly with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and on that occasion when the matter came before parliament on a direct charge against these two ministers of the Crown, Sir Rufus Isaacs used this further language:

No minister should use any information which he obtains as a minister for the purpose of furthering his private interests.

And Mr. Asquith, when Prime Minister of Great Britain, on that same occasion used this language:

No minister is justified under any circumstances in using official information that has come to him as a minister for his own profit or for that of his friends—