

to the Imperial Government and from the Imperial Government to the Shell Committee. Had they been in a position where we had authority over them, had they been constituted as a committee under a department of this Government, they would have been answerable to this Government; we would have had authority over them and we would have been responsible.

The attitude taken by the Solicitor General here is that he and the Government wash their hands completely of responsibility for the actions of the Shell Committee. Though my hon. friend asserts that the committee was appointed by the Imperial Government, I believe we can all agree that the members of the Shell Committee, whose names I shall read, respectable though those names be, were not selected on their merits by the Imperial authorities, but upon the recommendation of the Government of Canada. I take issue with the Solicitor General upon the point raised. As this Government has given its recommendation to the Imperial authorities, then, notwithstanding his views that the members of the Shell Committee are responsible to the Imperial authorities, I say that the Government that made that recommendation, and that gave that advice, is responsible to this House and to the people of this country. The Government of Canada, having advised the Imperial authorities to select So-and-so, and Such-and-such as members of this committee, it is inconceivable that it should be pretended that, when called upon by the representatives of the people to give their reasons for what they did, they should come before this House, wash their hands of the whole affair, and declare that it is no concern of theirs what these men may have done, or may not have done.

The Solicitor General went further—and, for my part, I was not surprised that he should take in this case the course that has so often been taken before, when the Government is pressed with what we consider a dereliction of duty—and he attempted to seek refuge behind the alleged conduct of the predecessors in office of the present Government. The summing up of this argument on that subject was: This Government is no worse than its predecessors, because it has done exactly what its predecessors did.

Before going further, I must refer to the motion made by Mr. Monk in 1903, after the South African War, which was:

For a return showing:

1. The total amount paid by the Government of Canada for hay and oats, purchased for the

Imperial Government, for shipment to South Africa, during the years 1900, 1901 and 1902.

2. The names of the parties from whom hay and oats were so purchased.

3. The prices at which the said hay and oats were so furnished during the said periods, from each of the said parties.

4. The total amount paid to each of the said parties, both for hay and oats.

This motion was refused by the Government of that day, it was pressed by the Opposition of that day, and it was defeated by the vote of the House. The Solicitor General now cites this as a precedent, but I say that there is no parallel between the two cases. This motion presented by Mr. Monk was a motion merely for the production of papers, while the motion now presented to the House is for an investigation for cause shown. Even assuming that the two cases are on all fours, I contend that the denial by the Government of the motion made in 1903 forms no precedent for the present Government refusing the motion presented to-day. The party now

in office and responsible to the
4 p.m. Canadian people took issue upon this question in 1903. They asserted by their votes that whenever the Government of Canada was called upon by the Imperial authorities to do some act for the Imperial authorities, even after that act had been completed, the members of this Parliament had the right to hold the Government of the day responsible. Upon this they laid down a new code of morals, which they gave to the Canadian people as an earnest of what they would do if they had the power to do it. I ask, is it honourable, is it right, for them to say now: we go back upon our record and will not do what we pressed the Government of that day to do in 1903. I do not hesitate to say that in my humble opinion—and in this I appeal to the judgment of the House—such an attitude would be absolutely immoral and impolitic, to say nothing more of it.

I go further and say that the case of 1903 as cited is not at all a precedent, as is contended by the Solicitor General. There is all the difference in the world between that case and this. I turn again to this motion made by Mr. Monk. It was presented as a motion for the production of papers, and it was moved without reason given, just like many others that are carried by this House every session. Mr. Monk, I say, made his motion without a word of explanation. He was answered by Hon. Mr. Fielding, then Finance Minister, who spoke for the Government in these words: