

men generally—yes, upon private individuals as well throughout Canada—cannot possibly be helpful in the struggle in which we are now engaged.

Having thus stated our position with respect to this matter, I would, however, say in the most kindly way to the Prime Minister that the motion now before the house seems to me to betray some anxiety, although I do not say, by design, to press this matter as quickly as possible to its full conclusion. I do not wish to reflect upon the Prime Minister's attitude in this regard, but in these days he, as well as all of us, must avoid the very appearance of evil in these matters. When the hon. member for Laval-Two Mountains was asked whether he had a statement to make, and rose in his seat and in the English tongue made a withdrawal which the Prime Minister, or perhaps I should say, Your Honour, found to be an imperfect withdrawal, the Prime Minister at once rose and moved the motion which is now before the house and which is being pressed so vigorously by the government.

Some mention has been made from the government benches about the matter of justice. Without reflecting in this connection upon the government or the Prime Minister, it seems to me that, in the moral realm, at least, the hon. member for Laval-Two Mountains should be given the opportunity in a gracious and benevolent way by the Prime Minister of unequivocally withdrawing the statement he has made. He has now made a further withdrawal, which I personally think is sufficient in the circumstances. We should be careful in these times to avoid the possibility of any misapprehension as to our dealings with a member of this house, no matter how we may disagree with him or how far his views may be opposed to ours. As the hon. member for Témiscouata (Mr. Pouliot) said a few moments ago, at a time when we are standing for the rights and privileges of the little man, the House of Commons is the place where we must exercise every possible care so that no one can assume that one of our members receives any less than the measure of consideration which we would give to members of the general public.

I am very earnest about this or I would not have spoken as feelingly as I have done, but, having listened to the remarks of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) I am further confirmed in my opinion as to the right course in the circumstances. I ask the Prime Minister in all sincerity if he will not reconsider the whole matter in the light of the unequivocal withdrawal which the hon.

member has made, so that we in this chamber will not give the public the impression that this matter is being pressed to a conclusion which only meets the wishes of the government; rather let us be charitable under the special circumstances which have arisen with respect to the hon. member.

I would add, before I sit down, that any such course should not be regarded as a slackening of our diligence and vigilance in defending our institutions. If it were to be so regarded the situation, of course, would be different. But when the hon. member has withdrawn the statement he has made, when the House of Commons has thus defended its privileges and those of its members, I think we may properly be satisfied without taking our full pound of flesh. Nothing is to be gained by pressing this to the conclusion which the government now seems so intent upon doing. I would range myself this afternoon in what I regard as defence of a member of parliament whose views I cannot accept and for whose conduct so far as this or the previous debates are concerned I offer no defence. It was not in the public interest for him to have said what he did, and I am sorry he did so. But, these things being borne in mind, surely it is the defence of our institutions and the maintenance of our privileges in which we are most interested. I trust the Prime Minister will find himself in agreement with the suggestion that, by accepting the hon. member's unequivocal withdrawal, we shall have defended our privileges and at the same time have served warning and administered a caution to everyone across Canada that they cannot make loose statements and, to use a vernacular term, "get away with it." But let us not, so to speak, go over the precipice by doing something which might be regarded in many quarters—although I make no such charge or allegation—as nearing the point of actual persecution.

Mr. DANIEL McIVOR (Fort William): I should like to ask a question. But first I would say that the only thing of real value which any of us possess is character, and when anyone insinuates that I as a member of parliament am in the way of being a millionaire, I say that that man's freedom of speech ends when injury to my character begins. I should like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, in the face of the statement which has been made by at least one cabinet minister that there will be no crop of millionaires during this war—and I think that is right—if it is not too late for the hon. member to stand up in his place and say, "I withdraw the statement—"

Some hon. MEMBERS: He did.