

we may properly measure what the moral guilt was of those who rose, we ought to know it in order that we may properly measure what was the right of this Government to act as judge in this cause. And, therefore, Sir, I am of opinion that the course which the Government has decided and insisted upon being pursued in this matter is an inconvenient, an illogical, an unsatisfactory course. I think also that it must be thoroughly understood—and we may as well understand it now—that, if we are to put the cart before the horse, we shall have to deal with the horse a little later. I think it had better be understood that we are not debating in this motion, in the form in which it is insisted that the question shall be put, when we cannot call, if it were convenient to call, for a decision upon it, when we have not those materials to which I referred the other day, the obligation to submit which to us has been admitted by the Government but remains unperformed; that we are not now debating, still less deciding, that great question, a question which is the question, Sir; for what we are debating to day, however important it may be on the general principles which govern it—and I believe it is of grave importance—however important it may be with reference to the question of sentiment and the question of feeling which have been raised about it, that question is but an incident of the real question which is to be tried between the two sides of this House. And again, Sir, I am unable to compliment the Government upon the course which they have pursued in determining that, this question being brought forward now, the discussion, in its practical form and sense, should be limited, by their motion of the previous question. I am not hinting that we may not debate the main motion just as freely after the previous question is put as before—of course we may; but all the questions which are involved in the main motion are questions which are properly to be debated, and some of them should have been brought forward in a manner in which the opinion of the House should be taken upon them in this connection; and the capacity to take the opinion of the House upon them in this connection being taken away from us by the proposal of the previous question, the Government has, as I conceive, exercised a very unwise discretion, and pursued a very needless course as well, in so dealing with the matter. I say a needless course, because I think it is pretty palpable to all of us that no possible amendment that could have been moved would have prevented us in the end from coming back upon the motion of the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Landry). I should myself deplore any attempt to evade a decision upon that precise question, but quite consistently with a decision upon that precise question being desirable is this proposition also good that it is desirable that there should be decisions upon other questions as well. Therefore, Sir, upon these grounds, and notably on the ground to which I have referred a moment ago with reference to the papers, when we happily reach that stage in this debate at which our opinions are to be converted into votes, I shall myself vote against the proposition that this question be now put, believing it is not fit that, at this time and under these circumstances, that the question should be now put. I shall represent, I feel sure, though I do not know, I am quite satisfied I shall represent in that declaration the opinions of a minority—how small or how large a minority is of little consequence—the opinions of a minority, and therefore immediately afterwards we will come to the question itself, and, coming to the question itself and recognising therefore the fact that with that question we shall have to deal, I propose to discuss the method in which we should deal with it, as of course after that first vote there will be no opportunity for further discussion. Now, I could well understand and I believe that I could well justify this proposition—that under the circumstances to which I have briefly alluded, it would be fit further to emphasise one's view of the inex-

pediency, the impropriety, the unfairness of the course which the Government is pursuing by abstaining from voting either way upon the main motion. I can thoroughly understand the opinions of many people as being in favor of such a view, thus leaving the question to be debated at its proper time and under its proper circumstances; and I can understand also—as you will readily perceive—the opinion as existing in some minds that in the sum of this whole matter, though they may not be able wholly to agree with the view of the Government, they should yet think that it was not a case in which there were grounds for recording a censure upon the Government in regard to their action. I have already declared, on the occasion to which I have referred, that such circumstances have existed in my knowledge, paying as I naturally do, some attention to the operation of criminal justice in the country, and I say that I can very well understand that some persons should reach that conclusion. It is not the view or course which I propose to adopt. I have reached, for my own part, conclusions which seem to me to be so clear, which seem to me to be so well founded, which seem to me to be so important in the general interest of the administration of criminal justice, that I feel it my duty notwithstanding the disadvantages in which we are placed in coming to a conclusion, not to permit those disadvantages to deprive me of an opportunity which, perhaps, might not recur, of recording my vote or expressing my opinion. Now, then, as I have said, it will be necessary that we should, before we can finally dispose of this question, though we are called upon to dispose of it now, it will yet be necessary that we should, before we can really and properly dispose of it, thresh out the question of the North-West affairs. I do not propose to enter into that discussion now, for the reasons which I have given. It is, perhaps, needless for me to do so, because I have already, at some considerable length, variously stated at from six to seven hours—I hope it was not quite seven, Mr. Speaker; I dare say you know better than any one of us—but I have stated in a speech which was but, after all, a chronological recital of the actions of the one side and of the other, my view upon the evidence which was then presented, of the relations of the Government to the North-West to the white settlers, and to the half-breeds in the neighborhood of Prince Albert and elsewhere the facts; and I have declared, and I think I have proved, that there were in those matters gross, palpable, incredible delay, neglect and mismanagement. I was struck the other night when my hon. friend from East Quebec (Mr. Laurier) in the course of another branch of his argument altogether, referred to the execution of Admiral Byng. I thought I recollected something of a historical parallel in another regard between those times and persons and these times and persons; and turning next morning to the book I had in my memory, Walpole's book on George II, I found what happened at that time. At that time, too, Sir, there was a North American question with England; at that time there was a French question in North America; and just at that time the annalist of the reign of George II, records with reference to the Secretary of the Southern Department, the Minister of the Interior of that day, the Duke of Newcastle—that duke who, when he was told, as I said awhile ago in this House, that Annapolis must be defended, said, "Oh, yes, of course; Annapolis must be defended; certainly. Where! where is Annapolis?"—of that same Minister, he records that what facilitated the enterprises of the French was the extreme ignorance in which the English court had kept themselves of the affairs of America. "It would not be credited," says the annalist, "what reams of paper, representations, memorials and petitions from that part of the world lay mouldering and unopened in his office." And turning a few pages on to the other event which had called my attention to the subject, I