

I think the assertion contained in that last clause of the report is absolutely justified. The evidence not only fails entirely to establish any wrong-doing on the part of Mr. Lanctot, but disproves any wrong-doing on his part. Mr. Blondin could have inquired, had he seen fit, from the Minister of Marine, and could have got every particle of evidence that was given before the committee, before he made his charge. Before a member of this House makes a charge of so serious a nature against another member of this House, it seems to me that he should exhaust every means of ascertaining the truthfulness of that charge, and that he should not on mere suspicion, or on the statements of men who had been employed by the government, and who were evidently disgruntled, make such charges as those made by Mr. Blondin. To my mind the evidence disproves every charge of wrong-doing on the part of Mr. Lanctot, and I have no hesitation in moving the resolution which I now have the honour to place in your hands.

Mr. F. D. MONK (Jacques Cartier). Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of regret that in a controversy of this kind the Committee on Privileges and Elections was not able to come to a unanimous decision, because, as members of the House are well aware, when we are examining a matter before that committee, we are in a sense sitting in judgment upon our own selves, and dealing with circumstances which might become our own at any moment. We should, I think, before that committee, free ourselves as much as possible from partisan prejudices, and I must say that the annals of that committee to a very large extent bear out my contention, because on many different matters in the past it has come to unanimous conclusions. We must not forget either that that committee, perhaps the most important in parliament, has under its charge the care of the privileges of parliament, both collective and personal, and we know what the obtaining of those privileges, and their maintenance has cost of struggles in the past. If my hon. friend had narrowed down his argument merely to the question of the quantum, of the amount, which the sitting member in this case has actually refunded to the government, I do not think the discussion would last a very long time. If we adopt this report, and if we sanction the principle that members of parliament can secure the officers of the government for the performance of works such as were performed in this instance, and all other analogous works—if we can have our houses built and repaired by government employees, and in other respects use them for our own ends, and purposes, I know sufficiently well the

temper of the members of this House, on both sides of it, to say that there never will be any very serious controversy about \$66 or \$99, or any other such sum in the settlement of the amount of the refund. But there is a far more significant and important question, the question of the principle upon which we are obliged to insist, upon the preservation of that principle depends to my mind the utility of every institution of parliament. History shows that without it parliament, from a body destined to represent and protect the people, has degenerated into an institution destined to betray the various interests which it was created to guard. The matter, therefore, to my mind goes far deeper and beyond what most of the argument of my hon. friend was addressed to. It is a most important matter, particularly at this moment, when we must admit that representative institutions have lost a great deal of favour, and with good reason, and that it is sought in every possible way to check the influence which those institutions are exercising.

Now, I do not wish to take up unduly the time of the House in discussing this question. I will come at once to the uncontroverted facts about which there is no doubt whatever. My hon. friend who has just spoken admits that. There are incidents as to which there is controversy, and as the debate progresses they will probably be insisted upon at greater length. I will speak of the facts regarding which there is no doubt whatever. What are they, Sir? Some years ago, in connection with the St. Lawrence ship channel the government established at Sorel extensive shipyards. Those shipyards are in the electoral division of Richelieu. The member for that division in 1909 started to build a house. I will not insist on the surrounding facts. They were excluded at the inquiry, and I think unwisely. I think it was unwise on the part of the committee to exclude the proof of what is the custom in those shipyards at Sorel, and what happened when Mr. Lanctot began the construction of that house.

The building of the fence and some of the woodwork was done by employees of the government. That was not laid down specifically in the charges and I will pass that over, but when you come to appreciate all the circumstances surrounding this incident, these are material facts. In 1910 the house was so far advanced that it was ready for painting and glazing. What did the sitting member do? He proceeded to have this part of the work—an important part of the construction and completion of the house—executed by government workmen, men attached to the shipyards and to have the material furnished from the government stores. The sitting member