

tion or otherwise, should be moved and spoken to with restriction to the subject-matter of the charge itself. It is exceedingly rare, if not entirely without a precedent in Parliament, that a speech is made on such a question of the inflammatory and impassioned character of that addressed to the House this afternoon by the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), in which he not only stigmatised in the strongest terms—as he had a right to do, with perfect relevance to his motion—the conduct of the hon. member for Lincoln; but in which he stigmatised the conduct of the Government in the severest terms, even as to its fiscal policy. I say that a speech like that, in support of a resolution challenging the conduct and character of a member of this House, is, I think, absolutely without precedent. The hon. member for South Oxford called the attention of the House to what he called the state of degradation into which the country had fallen, into which our system of government had fallen, and the danger into which the Constitution had fallen, by reason, as he indicated, of the line of policy of the Government, tending to debauch and degrade the country, tending to debauch the constituencies of this country; and resulting, as he claimed, in the absolute debauching of this Parliament. The hon. gentleman went so far as to declare, that a great number of the members who composed the last Parliament were amenable to charges which I remember having heard discussed upon the floor of this House with great acrimony, and which most of us thought were amply refuted at the time. I will pass from that. The hon. gentleman sought to attach a stigma, not merely to members of the late Parliament, but to the constituencies themselves, by his declaration that the people of Canada were to blame, inasmuch as the members of this House were as honest as the people desired, or expected, them to be. The hon. member for South Oxford went a step farther, and, referring to the members who compose the House at the present time, made the astonishing declaration—a declaration which, in my humble opinion, ought not be allowed to pass unchallenged—that the incidents which have given rise to the present motion, the incidents contained in the correspondence and documents to which he drew the attention of the House, showed, to use his own words, a whole mountain range of undiscovered rascality. The hon. gentleman went farther, and impugned the past policy of the Government in regard to their management of the timber limits and Dominion lands, for the purpose of indicating that a policy of corruption had been adopted as the settled policy of the Government, and he stigmatised the Government for having granted the application which the hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Rykert) had made on behalf of his friends for a timber limit of 100 square miles. He called the attention of the House to the atrocity committed by the Government, in having ventured to give without tender, this tract of 100 miles, to the friends of the hon. member for Lincoln, when the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) knows that we have on our desks an Order in Council, passed by his advice and on his recommendation, by which one of his supporters who sits behind him to-night was given 200 square miles of timber without tender or competition of any kind.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON.

I have only spoken of the attack made by the member for South Oxford for the purpose of calling attention to the fact that it is of an unusual character, that it is almost without precedent, if not entirely so, and that it invites discussion, and necessitates considerations beyond the range of the resolution which the hon. gentleman has submitted. I would now call attention to the observations made by the hon. member for Lincoln, in support of his defence. An hon. member charged with an offence against the dignity or privilege of the House, or assailed by a resolution, as to his seat, or his character, or his standing in the House, is, according to the usual practice here, heard in his place in his own defence, and the House generally passes judgment, or orders a further enquiry upon the statement which the hon. member makes from his seat in response to the accusation. I am not here to defend the hon. member for Lincoln. I am not here to apologise for a single expression of the extraordinary correspondence, which is almost, if not entirely, unequalled in parliamentary annals, but I listened to him carefully, and in paying attention as I did, and as I suppose we are all bound to do, to the statements which were made by the hon. member for Lincoln, and on which he expects the judgment of this House; I understood him to appeal to Parliament, to give him an opportunity of being further heard before a committee of the House. The hon. member (Mr. Rykert) stated that there were circumstances connected with this matter which had not been brought to light. He asked that a committee should investigate, not only the correspondence which is before the House, but all the transactions concerning it, and he asserted that he had documents bearing on the question which had not been laid before the House; that there is evidence of others which he can produce, and which would tend to exculpate him, or tend, at any rate, to mitigate what appears to be reprehensible in his conduct or his correspondence; and he has intimated that he has letters or statements of the person whom it is alleged he had more particularly wronged in this transaction, which would indicate that one charge in the resolution at least—the charge of his having used his position as a member of this House corruptly—is a charge which is not well founded and which cannot be sustained. I forbear, at this stage of the debate, to enter on a discussion of the merits of this correspondence or the merits of the charge against the hon. member, or to indicate what my own personal vote on the case will be. The question to be considered now is, what course should be adopted in dealing with this matter calmly and with the judicial responsibility which will now certainly devolve upon the House, notwithstanding the impassioned statements which were made in support of the resolution, and the equally impassioned statements which were made in reply. In consideration of the great field which the hon. gentleman who moved the resolution went over in making his charge, and in making at the same time his attack on the Government, and in view of the statements which were made by the hon. member for Lincoln, in which he earnestly solicited to be further heard in his own defence before a committee of the House, I ask the House at the present moment to pause, to consider the question, to avail itself of the opportunity which can be given in a short