

a member of the minority, consists in the adherence to this principle of justice; and to introduce a political complexion into matters of this kind, would at one blow render it impossible for a minority to obtain justice against an adversary, and render it impossible for a minority to obtain justice for themselves. Therefore, those who happen to sit on the side of the House on which I sit are especially charged with the duty of holding up that standard of justice to which the hon. gentleman has appealed. Then, Sir, it is on those principles of justice that we ought to act, and I ask myself, applying myself to this case as it is now presented, whether the application of the principle of justice renders premature, at this moment, a final judgment on the main motion. The member for Lincoln, as the hon. President of the Council has said, has asked for a committee. I cannot say that in my judgment the best, the convenient, the fittest course to deal with this case, is to refer it to a committee. My own opinion is that the best, the proper and the convenient course is that it should be disposed of here, for reasons that I will state to you in a moment. When we shall come to dispose of it, either here or elsewhere, I hold myself free, nay, I hold myself bound—as I suppose every hon. member will—upon such evidence and arguments as shall at that time be before us to examine carefully into every recital of the motion that is presented to us, and to ascertain whether those recitals are fair and full; to examine whether the *résumé* is accurate and true; and to examine whether the conclusion which is drawn from those recitals and from that *résumé* is just and fitting; and either to negative, or to amend, or to affirm, as the result of that examination indicates is right. But that, Sir, is not the immediate question. The immediate question is, not what judgment should be pronounced upon the main motion, but whether we should refer the case to a committee, and I ask myself: why we should refer, and what we should refer? I believe that each case of this description should be dealt with according to its circumstances, and that if there be a question complicated and difficult, involving the examination of witnesses, or a subject complicated and difficult, involving a long search into precedents, it is fitting and convenient that the sifting of evidence by the examination of witnesses, or the long search into a series of precedents, not heretofore collected, should be accomplished by the Select Standing Committee that we erect for such purposes. But, I believe that in every case we are called on to consider, whether the case in hand is one that calls for the interposition of that machinery, and the intervention of that committee. Cases have been referred to in the past. It has been said by the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Gromard) that there was a rule for and a right to a reference to a committee. I do not know where the hon. gentleman found the statement that there is such a rule, or that there is such a right. I dispute the existence of the rule and of the right. I know that leading gentlemen on his side of the House, have from time to time, in days that are past, proposed a much more summary disposition—the most summary disposition possible—of matters brought before the House, and, according to my recollection of the objections taken to that summary disposition when proposed, they were based upon the special considerations to which I have referred. Particular reference has

been made to the motion with regard to one of your predecessors, Mr. Speaker, in the chair. In what form was that motion made, and supported by the whole body of the Conservative party in Parliament? It was made, Sir, directly against the Speaker of this House, with that Speaker in the chair, upon a motion to go into Committee of Supply, as an amendment, in which form it was not amendable, in which an instant decision was instantly sought, and when the party whose conduct was impugned, and whose seat—if not in absolute terms, yet by a necessary implication was fatally assailed—was prevented from saying one word in his own defence. The hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Gromard) indicated that there was some right on the part of the Speaker of the House to ask the indulgence of the House to leave the chair, in order that he might make a statement on the floor. I am not familiar with the precedents upon which the hon. gentleman justified that statement, but I say that if there be such, and I am quite ignorant of them, they are precedents which ought not to have been invoked. My own opinion of the conduct of those members of the House who in that case made that proposal was that, altogether regardless of another consideration to which I shall briefly refer, they took, not merely an unreasonable, but I will say a hard, a rigorous, and an offensive course, in making the motion in the form in which it was made. My opinion was, that a due regard for the principle of justice would have caused the motion to be made in such a form as that those who moved it would have secured to the man whose character and whose seat was assailed, an opportunity of defending himself. Sitting as he did in the Speaker's chair, they ought to have known that the only mode by which that result could be obtained, would be by a motion to refer the matter to a committee, before which he could appear. Beyond all that, there were important questions to be disposed of. There were questions to be disposed of, questions of fact, and also questions of law, based on former precedents, which appeared to justify the view that the seat was not vacated, and, therefore, there was a reason in the search for precedents and in the taking of evidence for a reference of that case. There were many meetings of the Committee on Privileges and Elections. As happened in other controversies which occurred when the Liberals were in a majority in this House, the effort was to do that justice which the hon. the President of the Council appealed to us to-night to endeavor to attain. The case of the Speaker was a case in which a prominent member of the majority was attacked. There was also a case in which a member of the minority was attacked. And in each of these cases I rejoice to think, that the majority entered into the investigation, sought for the truth, ascertained the truth, and framed a unanimous report, upon which the House afterwards acted. But some hon. gentlemen have said that there was a trick played in connection with the presentation of the report. Sir, no trick was played. The Committee on Privileges and Elections met, they agreed upon the report, and it was unanimously agreed by that committee, in the presence and with the assent of the hon. First Minister, who was a member of the committee and the leader of the Opposition, that the Chairman should be requested to defer the presentation of the report

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