

consideration, than would be the case if we were all of us members of a social club, and one of our number preferred charges against another, which, if proved, might render him unworthy any longer to retain his membership among us. If that were the position of matters, then upon this evidence I think there would be very short work indeed made of the charges which have been preferred. And in a case such as the present, the behaviour of the man charged from the time the charges are made against him is a circumstance very properly to be taken account of. If a man is conscious of his guilt, his actions very probably will betray that consciousness to any observer. I have to call attention to the course which in this matter has been pursued by the hon. member for Richelieu. When the charges were made, now nearly two months ago, he stood in his place; he made his statement in a few brief sentences of what exactly were the facts. I am content to leave it in the judgment of any and every hon. gentleman in this House whether or not he kept back the truth, whether or not that statement which he then made in the hearing of this House was a frank, manly, open, and honourable statement of exactly what had taken place in this matter. The charges having been referred to the appropriate committee, the very first witness to go into the box was the hon. gentleman himself. He answered such questions as were put to him; he submitted himself to cross-examination. He has placed his case by that course in the hands of his fellow members of this House and he has walked out of the House and not entered it again or participated in its deliberations, and has purposed to continue to do so until his fellow members pronounce upon the question of whether or not he has done anything which would render him worthy of expulsion from their midst. I think in that respect his course has been that which any honourable man would be inclined to take if charges of this kind were made against him.

Before referring to the nature of the evidence, in regard to which I shall be very brief, I want to premise one other thing—these charges are literally of the personal character which I have described. So far as their result is concerned, so far as the question for consideration on the motions which are in the hands of Mr. Speaker is concerned, the one thing is, whether or not the member for Richelieu has deserved to lose his seat in this House by reason either of the fact that he has been guilty of any infraction of the Independence of Parliament Act, or been guilty of conduct of such disgraceful nature that he ought no longer to be received as a member in a body of gentlemen. The De-

partment of Marine and Fisheries, the government of this country, is not upon trial in this matter to-day. The conclusion of this matter whatever it be does not in any degree interfere with any member of this House taking such course as upon the facts disclosed he may be advised to take in regard to the Department of Marine and Fisheries, the government of this country, or any officer of the department who may have been, in his opinion, guilty of any wrong-doing in connection with these matters. I venture to think, Sir, this is not an occasion for political declamation, not an occasion for the making of a campaign speech which might be received with applause from the hustings, but that it is literally that which at any rate I seek to look upon it as being, the trial of a man to determine whether or not in our honest judgment he ought any longer to retain his seat among us. Accordingly I certainly do not propose to discuss the question of what the employees of the department at Sorel may or may not have been doing. I want to limit myself in a few words to that which it seems to me is the one question for our consideration, whether or not the conduct of the member for Richelieu merits our condemnation.

Now, Sir, it may be that those who think differently from the way in which I think upon this matter may consider that there is to be found somewhere in the evidence taken before the committee upon these charges, proof of fraudulent behaviour, of dishonourable behaviour, or collusion with employees of the department, on the part of the member for Richelieu. I can only say that I am not able to find any such evidence. I did not attend any of the meetings of the Committee on Privileges and Elections. It would have been difficult if not impossible for me to have followed the evidence of the witnesses as that evidence was being given, and I kept myself purposely away from the meetings of that committee, knowing that the question would necessarily have to be ultimately decided by this House itself. The case now comes here upon the report adopted by that committee, and upon the motion just placed in your hands for the adoption of a different conclusion. I have read, as I certainly ought to do, as a member of this House, and one who has felt a keen interest in this matter, every word of the evidence as given in the printed proceedings of that committee—not once only, but all important passages more than once; and I have studied that evidence as closely as it was possible for me to study it. I speak now in the sense of responsibility which I think rests upon each one of us as a member of the High Court of Parliament. Our students are taught that the highest court in the British realm is the court of