

listening for the first time to what they must regard as the law of parliamentary government in this country. It is a most extraordinary interpretation, and I, as a humble member and a new member, protest and ask for a proper answer to be given by the Government, that they either assume the responsibility, or deny that any such agreement exists or that they recognize it in any way.

Mr. FLINT. I think that nothing more clearly shows the wisdom of the rule which was invoked from the Chair than the course of the discussion as far as it has gone. The object and purpose of that rule is not to prevent discussion of grave matters of this nature by the House at proper times, but to enforce upon those who bring these matters to the attention of the House and the country that they should take such fair and reasonable steps as shall give those who are charged with any violation of constitutional usage, or of the rules of Parliament, or of the rights or privileges of members of this House, notice of the nature of the charge and of the specific lines of evidence upon which the charge will be pressed. We have here the statement of the hon. member whose name was more particularly associated with this so-called charge, that, until the moment of the meeting of this House he had no notice that it would be brought forward, that he had no intention of being present in the House to-day, being unwell; but, owing to the fact that others solicited his presence, he was in a few minutes before the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) took his seat, and we have, consequently, the statement of the hon. member (Mr. Davis, Saskatchewan) in the House that these so-called charges had not even been heard by him, and he has had no fair or reasonable opportunity to either accept them or deny them, or to accept them in part or deny them in part. Consequently, I think, it will be accepted by gentlemen on both sides of this House, that, however ingeniously the matter has been brought within the rules of the House upon the motion to adjourn, there is an unfairness to the other hon. members of the House in the way the matter has been brought forward. But, assuming for the sake of argument, that the so-called charges have been fairly brought forward, let us see what they amount to as put—no doubt in the strongest light—by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Quinn) who has just taken his seat. We have the affidavit of parties unknown—unknown, that is, to the members of this House as to their character or standing—alleged to have been taken before some official in the distant constituency of Saskatchewan, alleging the contents of a document a copy of which they do not pretend to give in their affidavit or declaration, and which, taken upon the face of it even assuming that it is correctly reported, simply gives the substance of an

agreement between two individuals, one of whom happens to be a member of this House. If this agreement is supported by evidence, there is nothing in it which ought to be a subject of inquiry at this stage by this House. It is simply an agreement, or appears to be, from the second-hand testimony that we have in regard to it, between an hon. member of this House and other parties outside of this House with whom he proposes to consult in regard to the distribution of patronage. Whether that is an offence against parliamentary law or constitutional law still remains to be adjudicated upon. It may be a matter of unwisdom, or it may be a matter of good judgment on the part of the hon. member to consult with certain parties in his constituency as to the disposal of patronage. But I call the attention of the hon. member who has brought this matter forward that there is not one scintilla of evidence that the Government or any member of the Government or representative of the Government is in any way identified with this so-called agreement. Consequently the only party that could be attacked in this House under the form of a resolution to adjourn, namely, the Government, who are open to attack in a question of this kind—the Government are not at all identified or connected with this so-called agreement. Therefore, I think that the rule which was framed with the object of protecting members of this House should be adhered to, and that those who allege that something wrong has been done, and those who allege that any hon. member of this House has been connected with wrong-doing should bring forward their charge in such a manner that it could be properly inquired into by a committee of this House. As the charge stands at present, it is unsupported by any evidence whatever worthy of the name, it is entirely a second-hand report, coming through partisan newspapers. I sincerely trust that if hon. gentlemen opposite take the grave and serious view which they profess to take of this question, some of them will make such an inquiry into this matter from independent sources and bring it forward in a shape in which it can be dealt with by the hon. member for Saskatchewan, and by other hon. members of this House.

Mr. DAVIN. Before you put this motion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words in reply. Now, what is the character of the defence? It is: We won't go into it. A part of the defence of my hon. friend, who is a distinguished luminary of the long robe, is a plea of confession and avoidance. The hon. member for Saskatchewan (Mr. Davis) made a speech. If any man was in a position to exonerate the Government, he was: he was in a much better position to exonerate the Government than the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister could honourably and truthfully get up and make the statement he has made, which, of course, I