

*Interim Supply*

perhaps the most serious in the history of our country. There may have been other instances in the past when Parliament was disturbed and the country upset over problems within Government circles, but I believe this is the first instance in our history when there appears to have been a creeping encroachment of international crime into high circles in government; and this is cause for alarm among all Canadians. As far as I am concerned, it is the major point of the whole trouble. It was mentioned by the Prime Minister himself last night, rather belatedly, recognizing the fact that, as he put it, we must deal with the sinister and growing involvement of crime in politics.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Before dealing with some of the factors I should like to express my appreciation of the action taken throughout this very difficult and trying period by a man whom I have not met, but whose name has been mentioned here, at the inquiry and in the papers, Mr. Pierre Lamontagne, the lawyer in Montreal. I think he has shown, under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, a devotion to duty and to the cause of justice that is highly creditable. The pressure that he was subjected to, as appears from a reading of the report of Mr. Justice Dorion, is an indication that only a man of sterling qualities could have resisted that pressure. He is a credit to his profession and a credit to Canada.

I quote from page 99 of the report, just to indicate the pressure he was under in the opinion of Mr. Justice Dorion:

It none the less becomes perfectly clear that this intervention by Mr. Letendre—

Who occupied a very prominent position as Executive Assistant—

—greatly contributed to heighten the impression on Mr. Lamontagne's mind that influential persons responsible for the government of this country were concerting their efforts to lead him to agree to the release of Lucien Rivard on bail.

You could not gain any other impression if you read the record of the constant telephone calls, interviews and suggestions—suggestions that people high up in the Government were concerned with Mr. Lucien Rivard. And Mr. Lamontagne resisted those pressures.

I want to pay my compliment to the hon. Member for Yukon who brought this matter to the attention of the House of Commons and to the public of Canada. I was present in the House on November 23, 24 and 25 last year when the hon. Member raised the issue, and I recall very well how he asked the

[Mr. Churchill.]

Minister of Justice of that day to take certain appropriate action. As reported at page 10386 of *Hansard* for November 23, the hon. Member for Yukon, in summing up his presentation, said this, and these words, I think, deserve quoting again:

This is the extent of the message that I am trying to get across to committee members, and I say that it is an indictment of the actions of the minister that he has not referred this matter to the proper law officers of the crown, to whom it should have been referred, to obtain their opinion. It is an indictment of the minister to have acted with the commissioner of the R.C.M.P. in a judicial capacity, which is not his function. This is what we have courts for, and I say that it is an indictment of the activity of the minister in making the decision that he did, shelving the matter.

At page 135 of the report of Mr. Justice Dorion are to be found these words:

Considering that he was called upon to hand down a quasi-judicial decision;

The Honourable the Minister of Justice, before reaching a decision, should have submitted the case to the legal advisers within his Department with instructions to complete the search for facts if necessary and secured their views upon the possible perpetration of a criminal offence by one or several of the persons involved.

The vindication of the hon. Member for Yukon is complete. He did on that occasion what I hope any hon. Member would do under similar circumstances—he disclosed a situation that required cleaning up. He took his chance in this House, as many people have to do when they deal with topics which are unpopular at the time, but he had the courage of his convictions, laid the case before the House of Commons, endured the cries from the other side of "Smear", "Innuendo" and "McCarthyism", and endured for the last seven months a type of persecution which has been carried on with people connected with Government circles. But now his actions have been completely vindicated.

This is the type of service for one's country that deserves commendation, because, Mr. Chairman, in the background of all this is a narcotics case. There is nobody in this country who has not a horror of the dope peddling which goes on. We are aware of the ruination of young lives that results from this terrible traffic. This is the shadow which was cast over the whole investigation and over the whole problem—the shadow of drug peddling, of narcotics, that carries with it the destruction of human lives. That destruction starts, as we have read so many times in newspapers and in magazine articles, with our younger people.