

not intend to discuss this subject until the papers are laid on the Table. It would be premature for any hon. member to arrive at a settled conviction in one way or the other until the whole case has been presented to the House and we have heard from the Minister of the Interior, and obtained the papers so as to know the ground on which the action adopted by the Government has been taken. But I want to refer to a slanderous attack made on myself in reference to that matter. The character of any member of this House is of importance to every one in it, to whichever side he may belong, and whatever can be done should be done to discountenance unfounded, slanderous statements calculated to affect the character of a public man. I refer now to the "World" newspaper of Toronto, and I characterize the statements there made as the most cowardly attempt to slander the character of a public man I have ever met since I have been in public life. If the "World" had had the courage or manliness, instead of dealing in malicious, lying inuendoes, to make a statement to which they could be held responsible, I could forgive them, because I would suppose that, believing they had good ground for the statement they made, they felt warranted in the public interest in making it. I say that no more serious personal attack can be made on the character of a member of this House than to charge him with being corruptly concerned in any contract given by the Government. The public man—I care not who he may be or what member of this House he may be—the public man who can be shown to be corruptly connected with any contract in which public money or public property is to be used, is guilty of an offence that ought to deprive him of a seat in this House, and to drive him out of public life. I may say for the information of the House, that since the House rose, and while I was in my room, some kind friend sent me a copy of "La Presse," and I will do "La Presse" the justice to say that they have not exhibited the contemptible cowardice that the Toronto "World" has exhibited in dealing with this subject. "La Presse" charges me distinctly with being a party to, and with being personally interested in the Mann-Mackenzie contract. One of my French friends will read it to the House more accurately than I could, but I read French sufficiently well to at once understand and to appreciate the slanderous character of the statement in that paper. The moment I read it, I addressed the following telegram to Mr. Donald McMaster, Q.C., of Montreal:—

Please see "La Presse," Feb. 2nd, fourth page, second and third columns, where it is stated among other things, that I am personally interested in the Mann-Mackenzie contract, and that with Messrs. Blair and Sifton am conspiring to profit out of it at the expense of the country. Demand immediate retraction and apology;

Str CHARLES TUPPER.

otherwise desire you to institute criminal proceedings without delay.

These gentlemen will now have an opportunity in a court of justice of showing what foundation they have for this slander. During the last five minutes in the House, I have received the following reply to this telegram:

Montreal.—I have your telegram about "La Presse," and it is receiving my best attention.

DONALD McMASTER.

That is the course which I am prepared to take with any responsible man in this country, or any responsible newspaper in this country, that ventures to attack my public character in relation to a matter of this kind.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I wish to state to the House exactly what I know in relation to this matter. When hon. gentlemen opposite were good enough to relieve me of the responsibilities and emoluments of office, I found it necessary to turn my attention to business, and I could not think of any business in which I could engage that would be more valuable to Canada than to endeavour to use the influence that I had obtained by long residence in London, among financial and commercial men, in drawing British capital into Canada, for the development of our country. I hope, Sir, there is nothing in that course that does not commend itself to the approval of every person. Well, Sir, having been very successful in meeting with a generous response to my application for money from capitalists in England, I felt it my duty to use every effort in my power to secure a wise expenditure of that capital and a satisfactory return, because I know that on the result of dividends being paid, it would be possible to obtain any amount of capital for Canada, to be used for so important a purpose. Well, I visited British Columbia, and I went carefully through the gold, and silver, and copper, and lead mines in the Western Kootenay and Slocan district, with the result that I came to the conclusion that the mineral wealth of British Columbia was almost inexhaustible, and that all the impressions I had previously formed had fallen far short of what I now believe the reality will prove to be. One of my companies being the Klondike Mining, Trading and Transport Corporation, I got all the information I could with reference to the gold fields of the Canadian Yukon, and I came to the conclusion, after giving the subject the best consideration in my power, that it was of vital importance to Canada that we should establish an all-Canadian route. The hon. the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) visited the Chilkoot and White Passes, and I must say that I had no hesitation in publicly commending his energy and his attention to his duties in that regard, because I felt that was due to a public man,