

making the defence of a man about whose case the least that is said the better. The Minister of Justice was eloquent on the character of his client. Now, I have no desire to say one word that would reflect on the character of the hon. member for Richelieu, save in so far as what I feel it my duty to say with regard to this particular charge may necessarily reflect upon his character. I am willing to assume, and I do so with pleasure, that we are approaching the consideration of the question, of whether, this gentleman hitherto enjoying an irreproachable character, is or is not guilty of the offence that is laid to his charge. The hon. the Minister of Justice was also eloquent on the penalty that might ensue if this House should decide that the hon. member for Richelieu was guilty of the charges brought against him. Hon. members who have had occasion to be present at criminal trials will have observed the pathetic tones with which counsel representing men whose offence carries capital punishment are apt to get far away from the question of the offence and to keep vividly before the eyes and the ears of the jurors the penalty that will follow if they find the accused guilty. That we had done this afternoon and done to perfection by the Minister of Justice. We were told that the question was whether the hon. member for Richelieu should be expelled from this House, and yet, Mr. Speaker, you hold in your hand the motion and the amendment to that motion, and is there one word of suggestion in either motion or amendment as to the infliction of a penalty upon the hon. member for Richelieu. Before you proceed to inflict a penalty you have to deal with the question of fact, and the question of fact is the whole question that we have before us for decision; the question whether as a matter of fact the hon. member for Richelieu is guilty of the offence charged against him, or, possibly as suggested by the hon. member for Welland in moving the motion, of some lesser offence that might be included in that charge that was made. That is the question we have before us. We have besides that, the question whether the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Blondin) has merited the censure that was passed upon him in the report of the majority of the committee. Those are the questions that we are called upon to determine; those are the questions that it is our duty to approach in that judicial frame of mind which the Minister of Justice so highly commended to us. And, we would be making just as grave a mistake if we allowed our judgment on those two questions to be swayed by the fact that the consequence of the finding in one way might be very grave for the hon. member for Richelieu, as we would be if we allowed ourselves in reaching a con-

clusion to forget that it is not only the hon. member for Richelieu who is gravely interested in the decision of this parliament, but that this parliament itself is gravely interested in the decision that it is going to render. We are called upon in this decision to set before the people of Canada what the standard is that parliament thinks should be fixed for worthiness or unworthiness to form part of itself. That is a matter of no little importance. It is important to this whole country that the people of this country should be taught that the standard of morality, the standard of honour, of their representatives, if not of the very highest which I would like to see it set at, is at all events one which does not fall below the average standard of the people of this country.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I address myself directly to the consideration of the questions that we are called upon to consider and decide. We have before us two reports from the Committee on Privileges and Elections, one of which tells us in substance that the conduct of the hon. member for Richelieu, as revealed in the evidence laid before that committee, is above reproach—not only that, but that he was so stainless, that his conduct was so far above suspicion, that the belief, the acknowledged honest, sincere belief, of the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Blondin), that the hon. member for Richelieu is guilty or rather his action based on that belief is deserving of the condemnation of this House. We have, on the other hand, a minority report that finds in substance that the hon. member for Richelieu has been guilty of unlawfully procuring for himself the services of workmen paid with the moneys of the people of Canada and goods belonging to the people of Canada, that that work and those goods have been appropriated to his own uses, and that he obtained them by unlawfully combining or co-operating with employees of the government of Canada to place at his disposal that work and hand over to him those goods; and we have the further finding that, in the judgment of the minority of the committee, this conduct on the part of the hon. member for Richelieu infringed the independence of parliament. So far, on the part of the two hon. members who have spoken in support of the report of the majority, it has appeared that they considered that the question that we have to decide, the great important question, was not how the member for Richelieu got that work done for him or how he got hold of those goods, but whether he paid for them or not. I think that very fairly results from what I consider, if I may be permitted to say so, the very moderate, and from his point of view very fair, laying before this House of the questions involved, by the hon. member for