

Mr. STEVENS: Now the minister has succeeded in reading me out of all reasonable company and branding me as being utterly unreasonable and not capable of being persuaded of the honesty of anybody, particularly of himself, a judgment which he lays upon himself, but which I did not. What I was pointing out, what the hon. member for West Calgary (Mr. Bennett) pointed out a little while ago, was this. This bill is giving the government wide powers, and we would be derelict in our duty if we did not examine it very carefully in order to protect the rights of the people of this country. I do not care a snap of my fingers what the minister's opinion is. I purpose doing that. I am not going to be frightened or estopped by the minister insinuating that it is impossible to satisfy me. Let me tell him that there are in this chamber other members besides himself who have known me during the sixteen years that I have been in parliament, who probably will not wholly agree with him if he will go out into the lobby and talk to them. Indulgence in that sort of thing is not going to advance his interests or the government's interests or the harmony of the House. As a matter of fact we have been treating the minister with a considerable degree of courtesy this session while he, on the other hand, has been rather provocative at times.

Mr. BENNETT: That is his normal condition.

Mr. STEVENS: A few things were said to-night which I resented very much, but I kept silent. As we go through this bill we will give it just a little close scrutiny.

Mr. DUNNING: The record in Hansard of his observations will speak for itself with regard to insinuation; the record of mine will speak for itself with regard to provocation. I say with all respect to my hon. friend that his attitude towards the government and towards me in connection with this matter from the commencement has been, in my judgment—I may be wrong, and if I am doing him an injustice, I regret it—one of insinuation as to the sincerity of the motives which actuated the government in dealing with the matter of building these ships. My hon. friend need only read his observations of the other night. I have no desire, as he would intimate, to brow-beat him in any way or to treat him discourteously. But if we are to be subject all the time to the threat from himself and from some few others that if a minister sees fit to resent aspersions upon his common honesty his measures are going to be blocked, I can only say in all fairness to my hon. friend that, like himself, I am inclined

[Mr. Dunning.]

to scrap when that sort of thing happens. I say this to him in all good humour. My time will be spent here just as his will, but there is a limit to what either of us will stand from the other in that regard. From him I feel it is insinuation all the time. He thinks from me it is provocation all the time. I am quite content, if he is, to let the matter rest there. I have no intention of insulting him at any time. I have not consciously done so, and I will not do so in the future. But I do not intend, and I do not think either the rules or the amenities of this House compel a minister to sit silently all the time while impressions are being created to be scattered by the press across this country that he is not going to handle properly the business which he has sworn to handle with common, decent honesty. I resent that whether it comes from my hon. friend or any one else. I have no complaint in that regard with respect to anybody on that side of the House except my hon. friend.

Mr. STEVENS: Keep rubbing it in.

Mr. DUNNING: My hon. friend asked me for it and I gave it to him, not in a spirit of pique but in good humour. I say that is the way we feel about it. Now we are square.

Mr. STEVENS: No. The minister says I insinuated and intimated certain things. I did nothing of the kind. The other night I drew the attention of the House to the fact that a shipyard in Montreal had been transferred to two gentlemen whom I named, according to the public report, Senators Raymond and McDougald. I made the statement on the floor of the House and made no insinuation. I simply said it was a remarkable synchronization with the contracts authorised in this bill. I asked the minister, before we had the bill and before we had an opportunity to study it, if there was any significance in that fact. I did not go behind the company and did not go outside to make any declaration. The minister recognised that in his cross-examination of the hon. member for Pictou. He was asking a hypothetical question; suppose we let all the ships to one yard, and suppose the figures were below those of the other tenderers, would my hon. friend criticize the government for letting them to one yard? I intimated to him and reiterate now that that looked like providing in advance for a possible happening. He may call it insinuation or suspicion or whatever he likes, but I am giving him the information that these contracts will be scrutinized.

Mr. DUNNING: Quite right.