

where I could do better service for the public, and not remain there as a buffer between the people and those who deserve the people's condemnation. I retired, and I am willing to abide by the issue. May I, in closing, appeal to the Prime Minister? It is said that we are in contempt. We are not willingly in contempt. We can, of course, be put in the tower for our wrongdoing; I recognize that, and for the interest of the country I am willing to sacrifice myself even to that extent. But I beseech the Prime Minister, as my parting word, to send me to the solidly-built tower of this building and not to the Laurier tower, so liable at any time to fall again.

Mr. A. H. CLARKE (South Essex). Mr. Speaker, if no other good comes from the investigation of the Lumsden charges, I think the House can congratulate itself that it has served the purpose of giving us the most interesting bit of comedy for the last hour and a half that this House has listened to in many a day. There is only one thing lacking, and that is that my hon. friend from Simcoe (Mr. Lennox) should have put it into song, and allowed the House to hear his musical voice in those beautiful lines: 'I will follow, follow, follow all the way'. There is a hymn to those words, I think he ought to practice that hymn and let us have the benefit of it.

It seems to me that the discussion today is for the purpose of seeking to justify, or excuse the conduct of the three members of the committee who refused to carry out the mandate of this House. This House appointed a committee to investigate certain charges made by Mr. Lumsden not made by any member of the opposition, but by Mr. Lumsden alone, an appointee of the government, in respect of certain other appointees lower in order than he—and the three hon. gentlemen to whom I refer were appointed to act on that committee. It seems to me that the arguments of my hon. friend are such as to condemn him, and the other two who have shirked the duty this House imposed upon them. It seems to me every argument he has used has been the strongest condemnation of the conduct of himself and his friends. What are those arguments? In the first place, he has taken up matters which he knew full well before he agreed to act on the committee. It has been frequently stated in this House that there is a great difference between the estimated cost of the railway and its actual cost. No one disputes that, and that was a matter for discussion on the 27th January. My hon. friend made then practically the same speech as he has just given us. It has been made many times; and if his object in re-hashing to-day all that was

said so frequently before, was to justify him in having refused to act on the committee, my answer is that that was an objection which he should have taken at that time. He should have taken that objection before he agreed to act on the committee. However he did not, and with all the knowledge he now has, he entered on his duties as member of that committee. Surely it is idle, therefore for him to say now, that he objected to serve on that committee because matters were not referred to it other than those which this House decided to refer to it by its resolution of January last.

Then my hon. friend went on to discuss matters which one would have thought a member of the committee would have refrained from discussing. He went on to discuss matters which are now before the committee of investigation. Being a lawyer myself, I was amazed that my hon. friend, who is also a lawyer, should come here and base an argument on partial statements made before that committee when the men charged have not had the opportunity of being heard. I was astonished that a member of that committee, himself a lawyer, should have endeavoured to pre-judge matters concerning which evidence has not yet been given. That is something which passes my comprehension. If those matters are so serious as he would have us believe, all the more was it his duty to carry out the mandate which the House gave him, and attend the meetings of that committee, and see that the fullest investigation took place.

There is only one reason, I understood my hon. friend to say, which actuated himself, and his friends in departing from that committee, and that is the reason embodied in a resolution which the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Barker) proposed in the committee on the 4th of March last. On the 23rd of February, by the unanimous voice of the committee it was decided to employ counsel to represent the public interest. Mr. Lumsden had declared that he did not desire that counsel should act for him. He made it plain that he would take that position. It was then suggested, and agreed to without dissent, that the committee should ask leave of the House to appoint a counsel who would represent the public. Strange to say, although my hon. friend and his associates agreed to that, within two hours after, without any notice to the other members of the committee, the hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. Lennox) got up and moved an amendment asking that the minority have leave to nominate the counsel. That took place on the 23rd February. That amendment was moved to the report made on that day. My hon. friend moved to amend the motion by adding thereto the following words: