

a colleague with fraud and robbery, and he has not the courage to put his seat in jeopardy. Mr. Lanctot in this House has answered the charges. He made an honest, fair, straightforward declaration. Witness after witness has been examined by the member for Champlain and his counsel, and all the evidence which we got from them went exactly to prove that the declarations of the hon. member for Champlain were correct. Mr. Blondin declared that he had been credibly informed, but the evidence has raised some doubt in my mind as to whether he was very credibly informed. He got his information from discontented men who had been dismissed from the department, from blackmailers, from suborners of perjury. This has been proved before the committee. We had a witness there who declared that an affidavit had been obtained from him under false pretenses.

Another of the witnesses had sent a letter to the member for Richelieu trying to blackmail him if he would not get him contracts; others of the witnesses admitted that they had been dismissed from the department, and this is the company in which we find the hon. member for Champlain and by which he was credibly informed that fraudulent acts had been committed. The hon. gentleman from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) dealt with the question of the independence of parliament, and as usual he pretended he was sorry to have to attack an hon. member on this side of the House, although he is generally very unfair when he is dealing with party questions of the kind; the hon. member (Mr. Monk) pretends that the independence of parliament has been infringed by the acts committed by Mr. Lanctot. Well, I believe that the opinion of the Minister of Justice is the true interpretation of the Independence of Parliament Act, and the hon. member for St. Anne himself admitted that there was no infringement of that Act. I believe that to infringe the Independence of Parliament Act one must make a contract by which he derives some pecuniary benefit from the government. Suppose a member of parliament—and I understand that members on both sides of the House do it—should go to the King's Printer and have copies of his speeches printed and pay for them, is he not making a contract and violating the Act if we wanted to put a severe interpretation upon it? I do not wish to be personal, but I would like to ask my hon. friend from St. Anne (Mr. Doherty), who has left the Chamber, whether a judge who has descended from the bench and who is paid every year a sum of money by the country is not infringing the Independence of Parliament Act when he sits here and votes the money which is paid to himself? The hon. member comes here and

makes tragedian speeches in which he lifts up his hands and calls to his aid a high moral tone, and he sits in this House and votes the money which is paid to him, but he covers his head with ashes at the actions that have been committed by the hon. member for Richelieu. The delicate conscience of my hon. friends opposite was not touched so much some years ago when one of their friends on their side had some work done in the Department of Marine and Fisheries at Prescott, when he had a boat painted. He made a declaration which, for my part, I accepted in good faith, and from this side of the House no one lifted his voice to blame him because we accepted that he was in good faith, and that he had paid as he declared he had paid. But his actions were exactly the same, if not worse, as those of the hon. member for Richelieu. We did not raise a row about it. But the delicate conscience of hon. members opposite is touched because a member on this side of the House, by an error of judgment perhaps, has committed similar acts to those committed by their own friends, and in whose case they sat there dumb and condoned the action they are actually blaming now. I wish in conclusion to say that I agree with the interpretation of the evidence given by the hon. member for Welland (Mr. German) and with the interpretation of the Independence of Parliament Act given by the Minister of Justice. I believe that the majority of the committee having heard the evidence and weighed it, could not come to any other conclusion than that the hon. member for Richelieu had acted in good faith. The work which he had done by employees of the department was paid for, the material which he got was paid for, everything was paid for, and if any blame—I am not going to say that there should be any blame attached—but if there is any blame to attach to any one it must be to the employees of the department who perhaps exceeded their powers. I will vote for the adoption of the majority report.

Mr. REID (Grenville). I wish to ask the hon. member (Mr. Geoffrion) a question. I was not in the Chamber a moment ago, but I understand that the hon. member made the statement that I had a boat painted in Prescott a few years ago. Did the hon. gentleman make that statement?

Mr. GEOFFRION. I simply said that I was so informed. At the time I knew who the hon. member was, but I do not at the moment know whether it was the hon. member (Mr. Reid), or not.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Mr. GEOFFRION. I did not name anybody.