

which there was to be no debate in this House, his purpose was to prevent any reply being made on this side of the House for some days at least. It was known also, that he would not be here to hear the reply. Now, it must be admitted that the family to which the hon. gentleman belongs, has not had the reputation of lacking courage, and, possibly, there may be some other explanation of the hon. gentleman's course in taking that particular time to make his address. He is not here, unfortunately. But I think I am right in saying, that the fact of his not being here makes no difference to the Government, and that the importance of the question demands that, whether he is here or absent, the matter should be discussed, and discussed now.

It was well known some time ago, that the hon. gentleman would make an address on this question. It has been whispered in the corridors, talked about in the hotel lounges, and even hinted in the newspapers. It was known also, practically known beyond dispute, that the great Conservative party had been employing detectives, sending them up to Dawson City—lawyer-detectives, I believe, two or three of them—to collect information for the purpose, if possible, of damaging this Government in the eyes of the public. And, after all that had been said, and the anticipations that were raised, I, at least, thought that the hon. gentleman, if he did not have any evidence, would have something that a lawyer might be excused for thinking was evidence, or, at least, taking as evidence. But I venture to say that nobody on either side of the House who heard the hon. gentleman's address would dignify anything he gave us with the name of evidence. It is the privilege of a member of Parliament, Sir, to listen to what an individual may say about anybody connected with public affairs. It is his privilege to come into the House of Commons, on a proper occasion permitted by parliamentary practice to rise in his place, and to tell the House what he has learned, without giving the name of the individual who had told him, without giving the House an opportunity to judge of the credibility of the individual, or what opportunity that individual had had of knowing what he was talking about. That is a privilege that is conferred, presumably, and I think necessarily, for the public good. But it is a privilege that is supposed to be exercised by the men upon whom it is conferred, with judgment, and with discretion, and with care, so that no man may be unduly scandalized and no man's reputation may be unduly imperilled by any anonymous accusation. I say nothing further than this, that I will leave it to this House, to the members who heard the address, or who have read—well, not all that the hon. gentleman said, for no gentleman in the press gallery, so far as I am aware, was courageous enough, or indiscreet enough, to take down the language of the hon. gentle-

man in everything he said—to the members of the House who know what he said, whether the hon. member for Pictou, a gentleman who was for years a Privy Councillor, who occupied the exalted position of Minister of Justice, has used the high privilege conferred upon him, as a member of this House, with judgment and discretion.

Now, Sir, I am not going to follow the hon. gentleman in the nature of the remarks which he has made; I am not going to denounce, or to insinuate, or to do anything of that kind; neither am I going to attack the hon. gentleman. I am going to recognize, as a responsible member of this Government, responsible to Her Majesty, responsible to my leader, responsible to this House of Commons, to Parliament and to the people—I am going to recognize the fact that a member of Parliament has made a speech attacking the administration of this Government and the administration of the department of which I have charge. I am not going to inquire particularly as to whether the member of Parliament who did that did it in a fair way, a reasonable way, or a decent way; but I am going to put the Government and myself in the judgment of this House and of the people of Canada as to whether we have fairly and honestly discharged our duties. The question is not whether the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) has been discreet, or whether he has been justified in doing what he has done; the question is whether this Government has properly discharged its duty. Now, Sir, we are responsible for our mining policy in the Yukon district, we are responsible for our administration of that policy, for our administration of the affairs of that territory. Just here I want to say that I do not propose, in this address, to deal with the question of royalties or the question of the reservation of claims in connection with the mining regulations in that territory. Those are large and important questions of public policy which may well form themselves the subject of a debate, and upon which the members of this Government will be well prepared to meet our hon. friends at any time when they seek to challenge the judgment of this House. But there are other matters, details of administration which the hon. member for Pictou has brought before this House, and which now demand the special attention of the Government; but I am not going to devote, on this occasion, any time to the discussion of our policy in relation to those matters which I have referred to. We are responsible for our administration, we are responsible for exercising reasonable judgment, reasonable promptness, reasonable diligence, reasonable discretion, in anything and everything that we did. And let me say right here, that I am not going to follow a policy which has been suggested many times in the press of this country within the last two weeks; in dealing with these matters I am not going to try to justify this Government by making