

resolute minority, for pure purposes of obstruction, continue to obstruct, after public questions have been thoroughly ventilated, and after the last useful word has been said, then I think the majority should have some rights. The minority is not parliament. The majority is parliament, and if, in the exercise of an obstructive policy, which serves no useful purpose—for you can very soon exhaust the merits of a question—debates are prolonged, irrelevant matter is interpolated into them, long quotations, to no purpose whatever, are read in order to kill time, then I think the majority ought to exercise these rights and the British parliament—as good an example of parliamentary government as we have in the world—has felt in the interest of public business the necessity of adopting some system of closure. They have two systems there. One was referred to by the hon. gentleman from London. First that when 100 members rise and go into the division lobby and say that the debate shall be closed, then the debate is closed accordingly. Another system is in Committee of the Whole, after the estimates have been discussed for a considerable length of time, the leader of the House then moves that the estimates do pass. They call that closure by compartments. It was adopted by Mr. Balfour in order to get his estimates through. That is another system of closure. I think the latter system is perhaps even more preferable than the former one. In the United States, the system of closure, as I understand it, is that a resolution is passed that at a certain time the vote be taken, fixing a term three days or, perhaps, a week hence. Then those who have to speak do so in the interval more briefly than they otherwise would, and after the speeches are over the vote is taken. Members are warned that they are limited as to time, and that at all events the discussion is limited to a fixed period. I do not see why any very useful purpose which a parliament serves could not be served in that way. Of course, the sentiment of free speech is a noble sentiment, and the English parliament has asserted itself in that respect, perhaps, equal to any parliament in the world; and yet free speech may be abused as any of nature's blessings or

privileges may be abused, and if it appears in the course of debate that they are needlessly prolonged; if it appears to one-third or one-fourth of the members of the House that the subject is exhausted, that all that may be said usefully has been said, then I see no reason why the majority should leave itself in the hands of the minority, because, after all, the majority legislates, not the minority.

The hon. gentleman from Hastings, and the Minister of Trade and Commerce, have referred to a division of labour between the two Houses. I think it would be an improvement, and in regard to some matters it would save time. The rule of the British parliament is that the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means and the Chairman of a Committee of the House of Lords meet at the beginning of the session and divide evenly between them the private Bills. That saves times, because a Bill once passing through the House of Lords, as a Bill passing through the Senate, and being approved by the House of Lords, generally passes through the Lower House in a very short time. That would save some time. However, that is only a very limited means of curtailing the length of the session, because we find that discussions are not, as a rule, on private Bills, but are upon public questions. Of course we can offer suggestions. Every one can cure an evil, except the particular person afflicted. Every man looking at a game knows the next best move to make on a chess-board. It is very easy for the ministers to bring down their Bills early in the session. So they should, but did you ever find ministers able to do it, and if you keep parliament in session for six or seven months each year, how are they to get their Bills ready? Every minister should give clear explanations and answer questions civilly and not provoke debate. You will have to reorganize human nature before you get that out of any minister that had been born or may be born in the future. Ministers like the battle, and so do the opposition, and in the excitement of the moment they grapple with each other and the battle goes on. If there would be some way of applying the Conciliation Act to members of parliament before they come into a conflict; if before the strike