

should come a time that the parliamentary rules involving closure would be adopted. Hon. gentlemen opposite have said that all European countries have adopted rules equivalent to the English closure rules, and similar to those now sought to be adopted by this House. But in respect of European countries, there is at least one reason why such a rule is quite proper, and, in fact, inevitable. There may be other reasons which do not come to my mind; but in all European countries, without exception I believe, there are groups of parties—more in some countries than in others. In those countries there does not obtain, as in this country, a division of political bodies into two great forces; and, consequently, in the Parliaments of Europe it is impossible to obtain what the Prime Minister referred to the other day as closure by consent. In a sense, we have had closure in this Parliament for years, but it has been by consent, and I submit that closure by consent for the future would have been quite sufficient for the needs of this Parliament.

It has also been said that the United States House of Representatives years ago adopted rules for the restriction of debate, and that we should follow the example of our republican neighbours. I submit that no conclusion is deducible from the fact that the House of Representatives of the United States has adopted such rule. The House of Representatives is numerically a very much larger body than the Parliament of Canada; the period of its sitting is, at least for some sessions, fixed by the constitution of the country, and it was inevitable that rules should be adopted to circumscribe debate in some degree. During the past two or three years I have followed rather carefully the debates of the United States Congress and there is no lesson in the matter of procedure which the Parliament of Canada can gain from them. The curtailment of debate by congressional rules was the beginning of that other regulation which enabled members of the House of Representatives to obtain the leave of the House to have their remarks inserted in the Congressional Record without delivering them verbally upon the floor of the House. This has led to a state of affairs which, I think, is very much condemned in the United States, and it is a practice which I am sure we in this country should not care to follow.

Therefore, when hon. gentlemen opposite point to the fact that in Great Britain, in European countries, and in the United States parliaments and legislative bodies have adopted closure rules, it affords no argument for similar action on our part at this particular time. Debating this resolution from the standpoint of a Canadian. I do not admit that there has been any ob-

struction in this House during the present session which justifies the adoption of a closure rule. Any delay in the passage of particular legislation which hon. gentlemen designate as obstruction was entirely referable to one Bill, and hon. gentlemen cannot therefore properly or fairly urge that public business has been delayed or obstructed because the passage of one particular measure was impeded by a somewhat protracted debate. Judged from other viewpoints, I say there is no necessity for the adoption of closure in Canada. Our Parliament is numerically small; our membership is about two hundred and twenty, not nearly so large as the legislative bodies of many other countries of the world. Our experience in this Parliament from Confederation down to the present time does not prove that there is any necessity for the adoption of closure.

Hon. gentlemen opposite have urged, as a reason for the adoption of the proposed amendment to the rules, the fact that on previous occasions opinions have been expressed by members of the late government upon the desirability of the enactment of the closure rules. From no standpoint, whatever, am I impressed with this argument. Even if it be true that closure was urged as being desirable by the Hon. Mr. Fielding, Hon. Mr. Paterson, or by any other members of the late government, that is no argument which proves the necessity or desirability of the enactment of the amendments to the rules. Furthermore, I desire to say that when these opinions were expressed, they were merely *obiter dicta*, or opinions which did not relate to any concrete proposal to amend the rules of the House. I think hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House will recognize the force of the contention that when hon. gentlemen are expressing opinions on any matter, not having before them for discussion and for adjudication any particular concrete facts, the opinions expressed are apt in some cases, or to some degree at least, to be irrelevant. Therefore I say that the opinions expressed by hon. gentlemen who were members of the late government are not binding or conclusive upon hon. gentlemen on this side of the House on the present occasion. I do not know what amendments those hon. gentlemen had in their minds; they may have been quite proper and necessary, but, until it is stated to the House what particular amendments to the rules these hon. gentlemen had in mind, we cannot pass judgment as to their propriety or impropriety. But this should be borne in mind. The opinions expressed by the Hon. Mr. Fisher and Hon. Mr. Paterson were made, I think, in 1911, during the election of that year, when the question of reciprocity between Canada and the United States was the issue, and,