

afraid of closure, and the hon. member for South Renfrew repeated again that no matter how he and others may have wandered from the path the right hon. leader of the Government had stood true to the principles of Fox and against closure in every shape or form. I am afraid I must be compelled to doubt the hon. member for South Renfrew, and I produce authorities for doubting him. I produce first the hon. member for Rouville (Mr. Lemieux) who does not speak without authority either on the stump or in this House. But the hon. member for Rouville made the statement, as a member of the Government, at St. Hyacinthe, and was man enough not to dispute it in this House when it was referred to here, that if the Government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier was returned, Sir Wilfrid Laurier himself would introduce closure. The hon. member for Rouville knows that he took a manly position in this House, and he does not attempt to wiggle out of it, and he does not say that he is opposed to closure. All he says is that he is opposed to the way we are going about it and that if we had referred this to a committee of the House to consult you on it, Mr. Speaker, he would vote for it, but that our course is entirely against his conscience and he is bound to oppose it. The ex-Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Sydney Fisher, said that not only was he in favour of closure, but the entire Government was in favour of it. He pledged his word that the Government if returned to power would introduce closure and put it into effect. And the hon. member for South Renfrew was one of the ministers in that Government. These two gentlemen sat in the Cabinet councils discussing this matter with Sir Allen Aylesworth, who was Minister of Justice, and others who were committed to the conclusion that they had to put closure into effect as soon as they were returned to power, as they thought they would be in the reciprocity election. The hon. member for South Renfrew would like to tell us that it was not going to be closure, that it was going to be the amendment of the rules that would not close debate in any way. He says in effect: I thought they were going to amend the rules in a way which I cannot quite describe, but the idea was to have a three months' session instead of a nine months' session; and this was to be done without closing off debate. That is the way the hon. member for South Renfrew understood the decision of the Cabinet council. The hon. gentleman to-night gave us at least one reason why he should be considered next to the right hon. leader of the Opposition in command of the party—the entirely repudiated the tactics of hon. gentlemen behind him who are now endeavouring to say, face to face with the people of this country, that they have not been

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obstructing the Naval Bill. He says to the House—and he will dispute me if I am wrong—that they have been obstructing the Naval Bill and obstructing it for a long time. He knows they have been obstructing and it would be foolish to say otherwise notwithstanding the attitude of the hon. member for St. John. Now, what a Cabinet we had, if we had only known it, in the last Administration. Here was Sir Allen Aylesworth, who was Minister of Justice, and who, if anyone, would have had the framing of any closure rules had that Government been returned, and who, possibly, for anything I know, did frame such rules—this man said:

When a member of Parliament so far forgets his responsibility, his duty to his country and the people who send him there that he deliberately descends to the level of obstructing public business, he deserves to be gagged, and I am ready to do it.

So, according to the hon. member for South Renfrew, this was the state of affairs in the late Government. He stood at one side, the champion of obstruction while in opposition and while in power intending to oppose to obstruction rules that would prevent without preventing it, that would close debate without closing it. And opposite to him sat the Minister of Justice, who said: You are degrading the whole parliamentary procedure: you have descended to defy the people, and have become a mere obstructionist; you have to be gagged, and I am ready to gag you. And the right hon. leader of that Government says: No, I am an adherent of Fox—who never heard of obstruction—and I will have nothing to do with it. No, says the hon. member for Rouville who was Postmaster General, you are all wrong, and I will tell the people that you are wrong; my interpretation of the result of this Cabinet Council is that you, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, are in favour of closure and I am going to commit you to put closure into effect.

There is no doubt that not only under this Government but under previous governments obstruction has been practiced in this House. There is no doubt it was practiced in the British House, practiced to such an extent that closure became a necessity. It became more necessary as the years went by. Closure as first introduced proved ineffective and in later times it has been stiffened, and hardened, and amplified ever since until now it is the doctrine of both parties and of every member of both parties. That is a fact I can prove by referring to the records of the British House. In the last session of the House, there were no less than one hundred and eight applications of closure, to say nothing of the application of what are known there as the kangaroo and the guillotine—one hundred and eight applications of closure, and only a small fraction of them moved by members of the