

lutely as it likes; where the majority can say who are to speak, how long they are to speak, what they are to talk about—and they are not to speak at all if the majority so desires. To my mind, the contention that the majority has a perfect right to do as it pleases in Parliament is not a true conception of the proper function of this great body, and this assumption has no connection whatever with the principle which underlies parliamentary usage and practice. We are here each with certain well-defined rights, and you, Mr. Speaker, can no more infringe on my rights as a private member than I can on yours; if you do so this House ceases to be a free Parliament. The chairman of a committee has certain rights; if he exceeds those rights he infringes on my liberties and privileges as a member of this House. I might incidentally mention the fact that that has been done several times during the present session. That is where the first real friction occurred in this House; the rules were flagrantly and openly violated by the very hon. gentlemen who should have been most diligent in looking to their observance. This occurred because young members were placed in the Chair who knew nothing about the rules of the House or the usages and practice of Parliament, only in so far as they could be found in the book placed before them. The Chairman and the Speaker have certain prescribed duties to perform and certain rights connected with their offices, and, when they go beyond those rights, they encroach on the rights of members of the House. I say, therefore, in all fairness, that a member has no right to obey either the Speaker or the Chairman when those officials go beyond the known rules of the House. Do hon. gentlemen opposite mean to tell me that the constituency that sends any hon. gentleman on this side as its representative is not as influential as the constituency that sends a member of the Government? That member of the Government is restricted by certain rules, and he cannot infringe on my rights any more than I can infringe on his. The rules, usages and practices of Parliament are designed to protect the members of the House, one and all. Let me say to hon. gentlemen behind this that the Government has infringed on their rights during the present session, and I am much mistaken if the people of Canada, who send these hon. gentlemen to this House, will hold them guiltless when they allow themselves to be prevented from speaking on two of the most important measures that have ever come before the Parliament of Canada. The Government has infringed on the rights of the members of this House sitting

Mr. GRAHAM.

behind them and having had such success with them they proceed to endeavour to infringe on the rights of the men in front of them. Is it any wonder that men in front of them resent such an attempt at infringement? Rules have not sprung up in a day to govern this House or to govern any Parliament. They are the growth of centuries and, I admit at once, as conditions change rules should change. Usages and practices should be adhered to when it is not found necessary to make an absolute rule. I admit that at once but we ought to be very careful how we proceed to change usages and practices and make a concrete rule of such usages and practices. Canada is frequently compared to the Motherland. That comparison is worthy of a good deal of consideration, but, in making it, we do not always arrive at a proper result. We have to compare the conditions of the two countries. Great Britain has had her usages and practices and rules handed down through generation after generation, centuries of evolution and devolution, and what might be absolutely appropriate in the Mother Country under her conditions might be absolutely inappropriate in this country. Hon. gentlemen who say that we should follow the Motherland in introducing closure, forget that the Motherland was a great many years managing the affairs of a great empire, with a great deal larger population than we have, before she thought of introducing closure and some of the most beneficent legislation on the Statute Book of the British Empire was put through before there was any closure. A need for the introduction of closure ought to be shown. What need has been shown in this instance? I appeal to you, if in the past few years, this law had been invoked or these rules had been enforced if this country, in all its parts would have been as well governed as it is to-day? I ask you whether if, in 1896, the rules now sought to be pushed through this House without this side being allowed to make any practical suggestions, had been in force, the provincial rights under which the provinces of Canada managed their own educational affairs, would not have been disregarded? There is only one answer. At that time a Bill was before the House which would have become law had it not been for the all-night sittings forced by hon. gentlemen on this side of the House—and in this they were assisted by hon. gentlemen who were not all Liberals, but who were standing up for the principle of provincial rights. Under that Bill Manitoba would not have been allowed to manage her own educational affairs. Under these rules that Bill would have been put through this House, imposing on the pro-