

say that the amendment of the rules of the House is a matter which falls within the purview and jurisdiction of Parliament alone, and not of the Government. Proposals to amend existing rules should not and cannot properly emanate from the Government, but they must proceed from the House. I doubt if there is another instance in the history of this country when proposals to amend the rules of Parliament have ever emanated from the Government. The reason for this is manifest and obvious. Parliament will respect its own rules, rules which it initiates, carries forward and concludes; but it is only natural to expect that hon. gentlemen sitting upon this side of the House, opposing the Administration of the day will hardly entertain the same respect for rules initiated and promulgated by the Government alone. It has been the traditional policy of this Parliament and of the British Parliament, and so far as I know of all parliaments, to place the amending of the rules of procedure in the hands of a committee representing Parliament and not a government or one political party. There has been given to the House no reason for this departure from a rule so long observed in this and other parliaments, a rule whose wisdom I think must be obvious to every hon. gentleman. Then, I think, we on this side of the House may fairly object to the spirit manifested by the hon. gentlemen opposite in introducing this resolution and in considering the proposals to amend the rules of the House. I take it that everything would indicate that hon. gentlemen opposite have introduced this resolution for the purpose of securing the passage of the Naval Bill and not primarily for the purpose of amending the rules of the House. If they were animated solely by a desire to amend the rules of the House, they surely would not have moved, as they did, the previous question, which has prevented any amendment. And I am sure that public opinion in this country will dissent from the position taken by hon. gentlemen opposite, and will condemn the manner of their procedure to amend the rules of the House.

The friends of the Government also urge that because other countries have adopted parliamentary rules similar to the one we are now considering, that is a reason why the resolution before the House should be accepted. I submit, and in all fairness, that the fact that the British Parliament or the parliament of any other country has adopted the closure or anything approaching it is not conclusive upon the point so far as we are concerned. Conditions may be absolutely different in other countries. Therefore it is not of any great importance to us in the consideration of this resolution to know that in other

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax).

parliaments rules somewhat similar have been adopted in the past. It is many years ago that closure was adopted in England, and it is only proper that we should inquire why closure was introduced there. It has been stated by several hon. gentlemen on this side already, and I need not repeat the argument, that closure was first adopted in England because obstruction was practised by a small group not allied with the great political parties of the country, a group not protesting against any particular legislation, but indiscriminately opposing and obstructing all business of every character brought forward by the Government of the day. That was obstruction, obstruction of a nature altogether unknown in this House and this country, and obstruction of a nature certainly not practised in this Parliament during the present session. I say the adoption of closure under such circumstances was perfectly justifiable, but similar circumstances do not exist, and have not existed in this country, therefore no conclusion or deductions that are at all relevant may be made from the fact that closure was adopted years ago in the English Parliament. Further, closure never was adopted in the English Parliament or any other parliament, so far as I know, in order to secure the passage of a specific measure which had been the cause of protracted debate as is the case in this House. I presume that I may with propriety and within the rules of this House, say that the purpose for introducing this resolution is to secure the passage of the Naval Aid Act. I say there should be more and greater reasons for the introduction of closure than that a single important public measure has met with delay and with protracted debate. Further, closure was never adopted in England upon any great public measure and to secure the enactment of such a measure or any of its provisions until it had them passed upon by the people. I doubt that it has been done in any other country. I propose to show it is highly improper and is against the best traditions of British countries to ask for the enactment of closure to secure the passage of a measure which has not been submitted to the people. Further, as stated by many on this side, there are other reasons why closure or something in the nature of closure was adopted in the British House of Commons. That was a Parliament of over six hundred members, while we have just over two hundred; they legislate not only for the United Kingdom, but for a vast Empire; they deal with so many important subjects that it was only natural and inevitable that there