

of expediting work in the parliament of the Empire—which transacts the business of forty-five millions of people directly, and indirectly the business of nearly half the world—and doing so in the name of loyalty to the Empire, is outrageous beyond expression. I say, Mr. Speaker, that political brigandage never went further in cowardice and treachery under any circumstances in any country.

Hon. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX (Rouville): I do not know what I can add to the eloquent, indeed the masterly, address to which it has just been the privilege of the House to listen; but, having been elected to this free Parliament seventeen years ago, and desiring to remain a member of it for many more years, if possible; having due regard to the constitutional liberties of the people, I consider it my duty to register my protest against the drastic resolution which was so tragically introduced into this House by the Prime Minister (Mr. Borden). This is a most important question, more important perhaps than the one which has preceded it. It affects the rights and privileges not only of the members of this House, but the rights and privileges of the people whom we represent. It is no less than a coup d'état which has been perpetrated by the right hon. gentleman, and, Sir, he might well have paused and considered his political past before consenting to go down to posterity as the perpetrator of this coup d'état. Sir, England has seen tyranny personified by King Charles; as an antithesis the statue of Cromwell at St. Stephens is not far from that of King Charles near Whitehall. In France, Sir, Louis XIV personified absolutism itself; but at his zenith he began the ride which resulted in the fall of monarchy in that country. When I saw the right hon. gentleman the other day coolly proposing to this House a resolution which dashes to the ground the privileges and liberties which we enjoy, I was reminded of Louis XIV himself, who, entering one day his parliament where the peers of the realm were assembled, made the historic declaration: 'l'Etat, c'est moi'—'I am the state.' If the rules which are embodied in this resolution are passed by the Canadian Parliament, well might the Premier say: 'l'Etat, c'est moi.' Yes, henceforth the state is the Cabinet; we have no more government by the people; but government by the Cabinet—it is a revival of the Star Chamber.

Truly, this is a session of wonders; each day and each week a surprise is sprung on hon. gentlemen in this House and on the people of this country. First, with great éclat, preceded, it is true, with much mystery and secrecy, the right hon. gentleman on the 5th of December last, speaking as with words of weight and excessive wisdom—he did not deliver his speech as a member of this House should deliver it, but read it—

declared that an emergency existed in regard to the defence of the Empire, and his emergency policy was produced. At first, it was a gift which this great Dominion was called upon to make to the Mother Country, but later on it developed into a loan. At first Canada was to be on the firing line—the danger was in the North sea; later on we learned that the firing line was to be located at Gibraltar; that we were not to fight side by side with the jack tars in the North sea, but were to effect an alliance with the Sultan of Perak, and that our base was to be at Gibraltar. As so tersely and vividly termed by an English newspaper published in London, the emergency policy has ended in an Imperial tragedy. And now we have suddenly had thrust upon us the introduction of closure, of the guillotine, and of that other process of killing amendments by compartment, so cleverly devised by hon. gentlemen opposite. All this has been sudden, all this has been unexpected, and, as the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) said, it is typical of the new Tory regime. The new rulers, the new Czars, have played fast and loose with our Imperial relations; but, not satisfied with that, they must now stab the Canadian Parliament—nay, the Canadian people—by depriving us of one of our dearest privileges, that of freedom of speech. I repeat, Sir, this is a session of wonders. The whole legislative programme of the Government since the Royal summons which gathered us on the Hill, reminds me of the box of Pandora. The moment the lid was lifted, all the evils came out of the box. Mythology teaches us that the only thing which remained in the box was hope, but, from the attitude of the right hon. gentleman and his friends, I am led to believe that hope is no longer in the box but that despair is in it. Our hon. friends find comfort in the opinions which some years ago may have been expressed in favour of a revision of the rules of this House by some of their opponents. They forget, in finding that comfort in our opinions, their own former opinions, the opinion of their leader, the opinion of the front benchers of their party, who, two or three years ago, including yourself, Mr. Speaker, all pronounced against closure and guillotine. I am quoted as having stated at the famous meeting of St. Hyacinthe that a vice existed in our parliamentary procedure and that it ought to be eradicated, that I then advocated a revision of the rules of the House. Sir, I do not go back on the opinions I expressed two years ago. They are not binding, it is true, on the Liberal party; they are not binding, surely, on the Liberal leader; but they are binding on myself, and I have no hesitation in saying that I am ready to study and frame new rules if only the right hon. gentleman will