

minority in Parliament of such a valuable weapon as it would be deprived of by the introduction of closure. Perhaps I was wrong; perhaps I was too generous. Nay, I was not; I would rather stand here to-day, having refused, after the fifteen years of my administration, to impose closure, and having decided to abide by the old rules. The rules of the House are intended to apply to the discharge of the duties which the House owes to the country, and to the Sovereign. The first business of the Government, the first business of Parliament, the first business of every member of this House, whether he sits on this side of the Speaker's chair, or on the other side, is to carry on the King's Government.

The Government and not the Opposition Responsible for Delay in Business of Parliament.

It has been charged against us that we have delayed the business of the House, that we have prevented it from going on. Sir, I deny the charge altogether; there is not a word of foundation for it. If the business of the House is not more advanced than it is, the fault cannot be laid at our door, but at the door of the other side. It is quite true that when we came to the first of April, Supply had not been voted, and the financial year was at an end; but if Supply had not been voted before that, whose fault was it? Was it that Supply was demanded and was refused?

Some hon. MEMBERS: No.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Everybody knows that each time Supply was demanded, we granted it without hesitation. Everybody knows that when my right hon. friend came to me and asked for a vote on account, I agreed without any hesitation and with unstinted hand, perhaps too unstinted indeed. Everybody knows that whenever a measure of public importance was brought to our attention we gave it our best consideration, and it was passed. When the Bill for the renewal of the bank charters was brought to our attention, there was not a word said on our side to oppose it. We discussed it fairly; we discussed it completely, but we offered no obstruction to it. When the Bill to ratify the Japanese treaty was introduced, there was not a word on our side which went to oppose the passage of that Bill. And so it has been with every measure. It is true, Sir, that we oppose a certain measure. It is true that we opposed their Bill for naval aid. We did that with all the might at our command; we did it with all the means at our command under the rules of the House. Am I to be told that in exercise of this power of strenuous opposition we did anything which is not in accordance with the best traditions of parliamentary government? Sir, at all times in this House, at all times in the Mother of Parliaments, there have been questions upon which the minority thought it owed it to themselves to offer the most vigorous opposition possible. Under the rules of the House it is expected that the two sides of the House shall carry on the business, as was stated by my right hon. friend to-day, and so it is generally; but there are occasions. I repeat, when an opposition or a minority owes it to itself, on account of the strong views it holds upon some public measure, to oppose that measure with all the force at its command.