

who cares whether he is elected next time or not except in so far his election is going to be good for the people of this country. He ought to know because he is a good North Yorkshireman; he is one of the nicest fellows outside the House that one could meet. I am not arguing about myself; I am arguing about a principle. Canada can afford to pay those who make her laws. I question very much whether the effect of the closure will be to save the time of Parliament. When I was a boy and a youth, I remember that Parliament used to meet in January or February in Great Britain and it invariably rose for grouse shooting which begins on the 12th of August. Last year they sat the round of the year, prorogued for two days and then they began another round of another year. I think the British precedent upon which my friend bases his action is not good.

The closure is not needed in Canada because the commonsense of the people has hitherto enabled them to do their business without it. It is not only not needed but it is calculated to be deleterious and mischievous because of the peculiar distribution of races and creeds in Canada. Why is it that we have not a permanent Speaker in Canada as they have in England? It is largely because we have a Speaker of one language for one Parliament and of another language for another Parliament. I should have thought that these conditions would have presented themselves to this Government, to the Postmaster General especially, and that he would have stood in this Parliament for the protection of the minority to which he belongs. The distribution of races and creeds in this country ought to have made this Government careful before it took this step.

There is another ground, which I approach with the utmost delicacy. I do not believe the standards of public life in this country are such as to justify us in bringing in closure. I give myself no airs as a Britisher on this subject, I know that in the time of Chatham and Walpole you could buy men as easily as you do fish. We do not have that condition of affairs to-day. When Sir Edward Grey became Foreign Secretary, he sold every foreign investment so that his judgment would be free from being warped and free from the suggestion of being warped by his own personal interest. You may judge of the standards of public life in Great Britain by the noise that has been created from the fact that Lloyd George, and Rufus Isaacs have dealt in a few Marconi shares. Such a thing would never be considered for a moment on this side of the Atlantic. The facts are all against the adoption of closure. Last week we had a debate in which one side seriously tried to prove that a ten-dollar homestead had been given to a man and that by the gift of that homestead he had made a fortune. I am not going into the merits of that matter. I only use it by way of illustration.

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer).

The other side of the House immediately met that charge not by denial but by trying to prove that their opponents were as bad as they themselves were.

Where there is smoke there is fire, and I am afraid the word 'graft' has a real meaning in the public life of this country. I never knew the word during the first forty years of my life; I never heard it used on the other side of the Atlantic in that sense; but I am afraid it stands here. I bring no personal charges, and I judge no man; but I submit that in this early period of the history of Canada, when we have the invaluable and almost infinite resources of this country to look after, when Parliament and Government are the only rightful guardians of these things, it is a mistake to take these watch dogs from the door of the treasury, it is a mistake to interfere by one jot or one tittle with the rights of Parliament to make the freest investigation into the way the money of Canada is spent.

Now, this argument could have been anticipated, could have been prevented, if the Government had been candid in this matter. My right hon. friend says: We will call a new session, if you like, to consider the whole rules. I draw from that statement the inference that the Government are introducing this resolution merely to pass their Naval Aid Act. But, in that case, why has it been made applicable to Supply? There has been no obstruction of Supply, not a cent; no hon. gentleman opposite dare say so having regard to his own reputation. Ministers have got all the Supply they wanted. In that connection I am going to take the whole responsibility of making a statement in this House which I think should go upon 'Hansard' for the instruction of posterity as to what happened in these troublesome times with regard to Supply. I think I know the opinions that my fellow-members on this side hold, and the majority of them were so sure they were interpreting the will of the people correctly that at the end of March they would not have given Supply to my right hon. friend for these two months. But my leader, stickler for constitutional and righteous ideas, a real leader of his party, made with the right hon. the leader of the Government the arrangements that have usually been made in such cases. And what did he get for his love of constitutional practice? He got rule 17 and the previous question. And what I say to this country to-night, and what I say to this Parliament is: look on this picture and on that, and you will know how to vote when your next chance to vote comes. The election cannot be postponed for ever. There never was a time when the distinction was so clear in this country between Toryism and Liberalism as it is at the present time. My right hon. friend the leader of the Government and his Government were elected upon a policy.