

I say that if there has been obstruction of the Naval Bill during the present session of Parliament, there certainly was obstruction of the reciprocity agreement in the session which came to a conclusion in 1911. I do not think there was obstruction in either case, but I want to make the further remark that, as far as I am personally concerned, I do not care whether or not I am charged with having obstructed the Naval Bill during the present session. I take the ground, and take it readily and heartily, that I was prepared to obstruct the passage of the Naval Bill in this House, and that I would be, and am now, willing to oppose by obstruction the passage of this Bill. So long as I am a member of this House, so long as my constituents send me to this Parliament as their representative, if they are of the same mind as they are at the present time, I shall continue, so far as I am allowed, my obstruction to the passage of this Bill. As I have said, I do not think there has been obstruction in either case, particularly if we accept the definition of obstruction as laid down by a very eminent Speaker of the English House of Commons, Mr. Brand. This is his definition of obstruction:

The distinctive mark of obstruction lies in the indiscriminate and incessant resistance of an extremely small minority to proposals of the most diverse kinds.

No action of ours, taken in this House, could be construed as coming within that definition of obstruction. If there was obstruction of the Naval Bill during the present session, there certainly was obstruction to the passage of the reciprocity agreement in 1911, because, as I understand it, the reciprocity Bill was introduced some time about the middle of January, and up to the 19th of July the Bill had not been reported. The Naval Bill was introduced on December 5 last, and for the last four or five weeks, since this resolution was introduced, there has been no discussion on that question so that there was not more time devoted to the discussion of the Naval Bill than to the discussion of the reciprocity agreement. But, the Minister of Justice says, that was a very important measure, it dealt with the fiscal policy of this country. We must conclude from his remarks that the Naval Bill is not an important measure. As to the importance of the two pieces of legislation, reciprocity in some form or other has been before this country since 1872 and all political parties in Canada since that date have been in favour of a reciprocity agreement with the United States of America so that the people of this country were thoroughly familiar with the subject; they knew it was not interfering with our independence or our rights of

responsible government. But what about the importance of the Naval Bill? It is a new departure, a departure wholly unwarranted by anything which has transpired in this country since we have had the right of responsible government. It is a departure which, on the floor of this House, was negatived in 1909 by unanimous resolution. Thus on the question of the relative importance of the two questions, in my humble way of thinking, the naval proposals before this House are far more important and their effects more far-reaching than could have been the reciprocity agreement of 1911. The Minister of Justice goes on to say that there is a clamour throughout the country for some amendment to the rules, for some form of closure in this House. I fail to see where the clamour is. If it is a clamour it has not the sound of the ordinary clamour when one arises in this country. In so far as I can see at the present time, the Liberal party and the Independent party and some of the Conservative party are absolutely opposed to a measure of closure such as this resolution imposes upon this House. There has been no Liberal newspaper which has not stood by our nonoured leader in the discussion of and opposition to the imposition of this closure. The labour people of this country are opposed to it, there is no doubt in the world about that. There is only one way in which the labour unions of this country can bring grievances before this House; this is the proper Parliament in which the grievances of labour should be heard because we have, in this Government as in the past Government, a Minister of Labour. I would like to tell the Minister of Justice that when he says there is a clamour in this country for the imposition of closure he is speaking without authority to speak for the great masses of the workmen and artisans of Canada. He may be speaking for the multi-millionaires of Montreal and the multi-millionaire manufacturers of Toronto but he has no mandate from the labouring population of this country which, as a matter of fact, constitutes the majority of the people, to say that there is in their ranks a clamour for the imposition of a closure Bill upon this House of Commons. Other hon. gentlemen opposite have spoken on this question. We have had two very notable deliverances from the hon. member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Meighen). I wish to say, in justice to that hon. gentleman, that he was one of the two gentlemen who approached this question in the manner in which it should be approached; that is he dealt with the rules, explaining the rules as he saw them according to his light. But there were some observations in both the utterances of that hon. gentleman which