

ada have every concern, that they are entitled to know from the Government; and we believe that we would be doing less than our duty if we did not insist to a last degree on that information being given. There never was an occasion before in the Parliament of Canada when a question of such financial importance and far-reaching consequence was treated as this question has been treated by this Government, ignoring the right of the people to information and, when asked for information, replying with the gag.

Of course, it is admitted that there is restriction of debate in the British House of Commons and also in other legislatures. If there is restriction of debate, it must or should be for good reasons, and should be based upon fair dealing. No one will suggest that the restriction of debate which prevails in the British House of Commons is based upon anything but fair dealing or that it is not for good reasons. No one who has followed the course of this discussion up to date will be hardy enough to say that the resolution submitted by the right hon. the Prime Minister, with the motion of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Hazen) is based on good reasons or on fair dealing. In the British House, as has already been said, the Speaker is the controlling factor in the application of the closure. There the Speaker is a judicial officer. Every care has been taken, at every stage of the amendments that have been made to the closure rules in the British House of Commons, to safeguard, so far as they could be safeguarded, the rights of the representatives and to keep to the front the idea of British fair play, British justice, and British liberty. I must say that our experience here in the debate on these resolutions does not lead us to the conclusion that they are good samples of British fair play, British justice, or British liberty. It is a question of the liberty and the rights of the people who are represented in this House. You cannot have a gagged parliament and a free people.

To what end has free speech been made a fundamental principle of Parliament? Why is it that we read so much of the securing of the right of free speech? Everybody knows that the right of free speech in Parliament was secured as a defence of the people against the tyranny of kings. Tyranny is tyranny, whether it is of a king, of a parliamentary majority, or of a political boss. I am not so sure, if I had to take my choice, that I would not choose the tyranny of a king who has some sense of dignity, some sense of responsibility and obligation, rather than the tyranny of a political boss. We have in this country enjoyed liberty so long and so fully that we have ceased to value it.

Mr. BUREAU: Except in Manitoba.

Mr. OLIVER: Most of us on this side of the House have not lived in Manitoba.

When I say the tyranny of a political boss, I am not using a figure of speech. We know that in the great cities of the United States, where the municipal politics of each city is admittedly under boss rule, there is a condition of tyranny that never was exceeded in the old days, in the palmiest days of the tyranny of kings. Men are murdered by the order of the political boss to-day in the city of New York, in Chicago, in San Francisco; and where is the justice that revenges the murder? We must understand that like conditions will produce like results; and that, if we see fit to change the political conditions of this country from government by means of a parliament to government by a parliamentary majority, constituting a political machine, controlled by a political boss, we must accept the same conditions as prevail in other countries where they have a like system. We have no immunity in Canada. If we forego our liberties, we must accept the consequences of tyranny.

The naval question is the stalking horse by which it is proposed to establish machine politics in the Parliament of Canada. We get, in this measure, and in the conditions that have led up to it, in the means that are being taken to pass it in this House, a taste of that side of politics which so long cursed this country, and which again being triumphant is giving us a taste of its quality. This Government has been in power for eighteen months. Eighteen months is not long in the life of a government, and still this Government has quite a record. In the very first few days of its advent to power, it signalized that advent by such wholesale dismissals of public servants as had never been seen before in Canada or in any other country except the United States, where it is accepted, as a part of the politics of the country, the same sort of machine politics as is now being so successfully introduced into this House. The slogan of the 'Civil Service reform' which we heard so frequently from this side of the House before 1911, was changed to the slogan of 'to the victors belongs the spoils.' The party that attained power by demanding that Canada should adopt the ideals of Britain instead of the ideals of the United States, signalize their advent by enforcing the Yankee doctrine that public office is a private snap. Able to assist them in this process they established a commission at high salaries, of which commission two members at any rate only waited long enough to have attention drawn to their records, and the commission dissolved in thin air. They attempted to defeat the government of the province of Saskatche-