

year 1910. The Unionist party challenged the Government to a dissolution. They said that the people had not expressed their opinion upon the provisions of that Bill and that therefore the closure should not be applied. The people thought, as did the Unionist party at that time, and the issue had to come directly before the people. There was no justification in the opinion of English statesmen and of the English people, for the adoption of closure. It was the people's innings, and closure was not invoked for the purpose of passing the Veto Bill. The position in that particular respect was absolutely sound. By no process of legitimate reasoning can the Government make it clear to this House or the country that it is fair and within the traditions of British parliaments to enact closure so as to secure the passage of a measure which was never considered by the people of the country. The position which I take is unanswerable. It is a reason why this resolution should not be adopted by the House.

Judged by the best British standards and parliamentary traditions, where do we stand upon this question? The Naval Aid Bill was not an issue in the last election. I have heard a statement to the contrary made by hon. gentleman opposite, but I deny absolutely the truth of such. I have never been able to make myself believe that they were sincere in making that statement. I will modify however to some extent, my statement and say that possibly in the province of Quebec it was an issue. But it was an issue to this extent only, that the people were led to believe by hon. gentlemen opposite that they would introduce no naval policy, that particularly and specifically, they would not introduce any contribution scheme, without first submitting the question to the people. It is true that such expressions by leaders of the Government party may have been indefinite and deliberately clouded in order to mystify the electorate of Quebec. But, nevertheless, I say that substantially every one of them, without equivocation, promised that there would be no naval policy or scheme adopted without first submitting the same to the country.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Ministers included.

Mr. MACLEAN: Ministers included.

Mr. BUREAU: And repealing the Naval Act.

Mr. MACLEAN: And, further, the repeal of the Naval Act. However, the repeal of the Naval Act is not directly relevant to the point I am making, although it is in a sense. The fact I am now stating was clearly proven by my hon. friend from Shefford (Mr. Bovin) in the very excellent and able speech which he delivered last Friday evening. It being

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax).

the case that the question of naval aid was not before the electors in the last election, except in one province, and there in a sense which does not afford an assumption on the part of the Government that the people of that province even justified the proposed Bill. I ask hon. gentlemen opposite, I ask the hon. the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Rogers), the hon. the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Cochrane) and the hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Hazen), who are the only three members of the Government present in the House this evening, if they think that, in the light of such facts and under all the circumstances, they can justify to the House and to the country the course which they are seeking to pursue to-night.

Again, we were told by the right hon. the Prime Minister that the purport and effect of the Naval Aid Bill was not to contribute to the British Admiralty three ships but the loaning of them to the British Admiralty. Some day, they say, they will be returned to Canada and will become part of a Canadian navy. There is only one inference fairly deducible from that statement and it is that the Government themselves some day propose the establishment of a Canadian navy, they propose recalling these three vessels which we own and which for the time being are loaned to the British Admiralty. This in effect is the first instalment of their permanent policy of a Canadian navy. Now they will not deny that they promised the people of Quebec, and the people of Canada generally, that they would submit this question to the country before their policy was adopted. Still they are asking Parliament for a vote of \$35,000,000 and for, according to their own statement, what is the first instalment of a Canadian permanent naval policy. If they wish to observe their own promises they should not forget that they are under obligation to submit their policy to the people before commencing even the first instalment of a policy.

Therefore, in conclusion, let me say that I think that the course which the Government should pursue is quite clear. The Government can withdraw this resolution, at least until the principles involved in the Naval Bill now before us have been submitted to the people. They are violating the best parliamentary practice known in British countries when they seek to secure the passage of that, or any other measure, by closure until the people have passed upon it. There is one other course, and that is to withdraw the present measure. Such, Mr. Speaker, are my reasons for opposing the resolution which we are now considering.

Let me revert to the objection which I