

I would like hon. gentlemen, and especially my hon. friends on the other side of the House, to note the language of Mr. Fisher that follows:

—'and I give my pledge that, if the Laurier Government is returned again, the rules of the House will be changed. I consider present conditions inimical to the proper conduct of public business.'

Speaking again at Knowlton, Que., August 21, 1911, as reported in the Montreal Herald, the Hon. Sydney Fisher said:

'The minister stated that it was the intention of the Government, should it be returned, to so change the rules of the House, that such obstruction would in future be impossible.'

The Prime Minister rejoices over these statements and uses them as proof that the people of Canada want closure. The right hon. gentleman should not forget that these speeches did not foreshadow such drastic amendments to the rules as he has now introduced without, as I said before, giving Canada's greatest statesman a chance to offer a single amendment. He should not forget that these speeches and these opinions were placed before the people justly and fairly during an election campaign; he should not forget that perhaps because of these speeches, the Laurier government was not returned to power; he should not forget that the Hon. Mr. Paterson, the Hon. Mr. Fisher, the Hon. Mr. Aylesworth, and the Hon. Mr. Fielding, are not in the House to-day, and he should interpret these speeches and the defeat of those who made them as a condemnation of closure as well as a condemnation of the reciprocity agreement which these same hon. gentlemen advocated at the same time. Why does he not look for inspiration to the utterances of hon. gentlemen who spoke in this House in 1910 and who since making those speeches, have been returned to this House and now occupy envied and honourable positions therein. The hon. member for Guysborough (Mr. Sinclair) read from 'Hansard' of 1909-10 the words pronounced in this House by Mr. W. F. Maclean, member for South York, Mr. Foster, member for North Toronto and Mr. Hughes, member for Victoria-Haliburton, against closure. Let it be remembered, the hon. member for North Toronto was returned to this House and became Minister of Trade and Commerce and that the hon. member for Victoria-Haliburton was returned and became Minister of Militia and Defence, while those who were in favour of closure were defeated. An opinion which will be, I am sure, received with much respect by gentlemen sitting on both sides of this House, and which was not quoted by my hon. friend from Guysborough, is the opinion of the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) in 1909, when Sir Wil-

frid Laurier moved that a committee be appointed to revise the rules of this House. The hon. member for East Grey has gone through an election since then; he was elected a member of this House and he now occupies the honoured and enviable position of Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons. This is what the Hon. Mr. Sproule said in 1909:

Rumours have been prevalent for some time past in the government press that the Government intended to revise the rules of the House at an early date, and to introduce what is known as the closure. I would like to ask the First Minister if that is the intention in this revision of the rules. I would like to say that so far as I can judge the temper of parliamentarians generally, they regard the freedom of debate as one of the dearest rights of the representatives of the people, and if any attempt is made under the guise of amending the rules to prevent the freest discussion of all public questions, I can only say that in my judgment the Government will invite a good deal of trouble.

Mr. CARVELL: What did Sir Wilfrid Laurier answer to that?

Mr. BOIVIN: It might not be amiss to cite it again. Sir Wilfrid Laurier answered:

I can assure my hon. friend (Dr. Sproule) that the Government has no intention of using the majority now supporting it in Parliament to curtail any of the rights and privileges of members of this Parliament. We prize them as highly on this side as hon. members do on the other side.

That was the answer given by the right hon. the leader of the Government in 1909, (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), and that was the policy advocated by my right hon. leader in 1913. I might also add that the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was a candidate in two counties. He was returned in one county by acclamation, and the other county he took from the Conservatives with a handsome majority.

Mr. LEMIEUX: There was no previous question.

Mr. BOIVIN: I do not think the closure should be introduced in Canada at the present time, with or without the 'previous question,' because conditions here are not the same as in England. We are brought up in different spheres; we have attended different schools; we have inherited from our forefathers different qualities and different tendencies, but I believe that we are all, French Canadians and English Canadians, Tories, Grits and even Nationalists, imbued with love for our country and a desire to make that country great, grand and prosperous, which will enable us for many years to come to meet upon the floor of this House of Commons and to discuss without closure and without gag of any