

say about it. I dare to say that other members in the House have something to say about it. But we cannot speak any more. It is one o'clock, we have to vote and neither I nor anybody else, I believe, on our side, will dare to impose a speech on hon. members on the other side of the House. This afternoon I heard the Minister of Justice say that the fullest opportunity would be given to discuss the matter. The minister was surely not serious when he said that. If he was serious we would not be called upon here to-night to discuss this matter until the vote is taken. The minister knows very well that the House cannot freely express itself and that hon. members cannot discuss a matter of this importance at one o'clock in the morning and when everyone is waiting for the vote. The minister explained the policy of the Government. I heard him for two hours, and I was very glad to hear him, because I learned something from what he said. The fact that

the minister took two hours to make his speech is sufficient proof that the matter is one of importance and that every opportunity should be given to hon. members to discuss it freely. The matter which is now before the House raises any number of questions—the question of the right of Canada to make treaties; the question whether or not our status has been changed since 1914; the question of the extent to which our ratification will be binding upon Canada in the future; the question of the part which has been taken by the Imperialists in providing for this ratification with which we have nothing to do; whether this ratification is a political game or not; whether our ratification is necessary, whether we are not by this ratification surrendering the prerogative of Parliament. There are many other very important and solemn questions arising from this ratification, and yet we are debarred from carefully studying and discussing this matter. I shall take my seat now but not without protesting very strongly against the manner in which Parliament is being treated. It will be for the people themselves to judge of the conduct of the Prime Minister under these circumstances. I probably should go a little farther and say that in the way in which he has been acting the Prime Minister has only followed the line of conduct which he has unfortunately pursued on several previous occasions when he has attempted to restrain the liberty of Parliament.

[Mr. Denis.]

Mr. E. d'ANJOU (Rimouski) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, the question which is now before the House has been discussed under all its various angles and at this late hour and at this stage of the debate I do not intend to prolong the proceedings. That my hon. friends opposite are anxious to vote on this question and to bind the country to militarism, I am well aware, but I submit that every member, whether on the Government side or on the Opposition side has a right to obtain a hearing in this House and I am going to exercise my right but I desire to make my remarks as brief as possible.

I merely wish to protest, as the hon. member who spoke before me, did, against the mode of procedure adopted by the Government under the circumstances. No wonder, when one remembers that it was this Government who introduced the rule of the gag. They do not resort to the closure rule to-night, because the hon. members on this side are courteous enough to agree that the vote should be taken now.

The hon. gentlemen opposite who have committed so many abuses of power, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, could not hesitate, even when matters of the utmost importance were under discussion, attempting to curtail the debate that they might the sooner obtain a ratification.

I wish to protest against Clause X in the Covenant of the League of Nations which binds Canada for the future and involves her in every war, without Parliament being previously consulted.

The hon. Minister of Justice, in his speech, tried to explain that we could hope for any possible guarantee and that, were it not stipulated that the Canadian Parliament is to be consulted before our entering the war, we should naturally trust the present Government which, he hopes, will long remain in power.

For my part, I must say that I do not trust this Government, that I never trusted it and now less than ever; that we should behave cautiously and that an amendment like that moved by the hon. member for Queen's and Shelburne (Mr. Fielding) should carry, so as to have guarantees for the future. But, as I said, after witnessing so many abuses of power that have been perpetrated, as the sending of our soldiers to Siberia, without Parliament having been consulted, I have misgivings for the future, and it would be wise to insert a proviso in the Treaty so as to make sure that such abuses of power will not recur.