

the purpose of preventing that consideration of this measure to which its importance surely entitles it—I say that if the Government is justified in so applying these rules in order to gag discussion, in order to prevent the consideration of this question to which its importance entitles it, then the Opposition is entitled to resort to obstruction to prevent the success of the application of the gag.

In regard to this matter of closure, or the application of the gag to debate, is there any evidence that such rules will facilitate the business of Parliament? What is the evidence of that, Mr. Speaker? Assuming Parliament to be constituted, as the evidence is that this Parliament is constituted, and that there has been nothing but fair consideration and fair discussion, what is the result? It is true that by the application of the gag the Government can prevent the proper consideration of any matter. They can force through any provision that they wish, but they cannot prevent obstruction. Let me suggest that if a free Parliament is prevented from the free consideration and fair discussion of these questions that are of vital importance to the people of the country, they are driven to methods of obstruction in order that they may make their influence in Parliament felt. Has the closure in Great Britain prevented obstruction? Is it not a fact that ever since closure was introduced there have been amendments and amendments and amendments? If anyone will look at the 'Hansard' of the British House of Commons, he will reach a conclusion as to whether debate has been prevented by closure. Where we have two volumes of 'Hansard' they have five, six, seven or eight, or more. It is true that this closure measure can protect the Government in driving through a specific proposal, but it cannot facilitate the business of Parliament and I would suggest to the Government side—I would suggest to the Government itself—that they consider that question carefully before they carry their resolutions through.

It would be begging the question, Mr. Speaker, to consider these resolutions as having relation to the ordinary business of the House. They are not necessary, they are not called for by reason of the ordinary business of the House. They are prepared for the purpose of protecting the Government from being driven to a dissolution on any important question of public policy. That is the only legitimate purpose that they have. In regard to the question of dissolution, the Government take the position that they have a majority in the House and that, having that majority, they are entitled to legislate as they please. That is not the proper expression of the terms of our constitution. It is notorious that the Government do not hold their control of leg-

islation longer than they are able to hold the approval of the majority of the people of the country. It is an essential part of the constitution of our country that Parliament may be dissolved on the order or mandate of the Governor General, the representative of the King. Although the Government may have a majority in the House, it is still within the power of a Governor General to ask for their resignations and to require a dissolution of the House. Why is that? It is so that it shall be established beyond any question that the Government in Parliament represent a majority of the people of the country. There have been instances in the history of Canada in which this action has been taken and when the Government, which held a majority in the House, as this Government hold a majority in the House, were sent to the country. Parliament was dissolved and the country disapproved of the Government so sent. It is not so much a question as to who sends the Government to the country; the question is that it is a fundamental principle of our constitution that the Government of the day shall be representative of the majority of our people, and so, in pursuance of that idea and of that principle, occasions have occurred in times past when the Government has been forced to the country by an opposition exercising its right of discussion and debate on matters of sufficient importance. It is to defend the Government against that contingency and, in the first instance, I will say that it is only for that purpose, that this provision is introduced. It is to protect the Government of the day, representing what they know to be less than a majority of public opinion in this country, from having to face that public opinion and abide by its results. That is the great infraction of the constitution that is being perpetrated by these resolutions.

The attitude of the Government upon this naval aid question is such, and is so strongly persisted in, that the only way in which public opinion and Parliament can be brought into accord is by means of a general election. This naval Bill is not a policy. The Government has declared time and time again that it is not a policy. It is an emergency but the existence of the emergency has been disapproved and still we are unable to get any declaration as to policy. We are to be asked to vote \$35,000,000 without an understanding, without reasons given and without knowledge as to obligations created or discharged. It has been advertised as a gift; it turns out to be a loan and surely the people of Canada are entitled to know upon what terms this loan is being made and upon what terms it will be repaid. The Government up to date have absolutely refused that information; their answer is that they and the Admiralty have decided and that the people of Canada have no concern in the matter. Our contention is that the people of Can-

Mr. OLIVER.