

electorate that public opinion is with them in their attitude.

It is true that gentlemen opposite did not debate the Bill as much as we did on this side. One hon. gentleman justified this resolution by the fact that we upon this side of the House spoke more columns in 'Hansard' than hon. gentlemen on that side of the House. Hon. gentlemen opposite could not debate the question. When the Bill was first introduced, it was upon the theory, and upon the basis that there was an emergency. That was the reason assigned by the Prime Minister. The debate had not continued very far when that reason was abandoned.

It followed quite logically that hon. gentlemen could not participate in the debate because the reasons which they gave originally for introducing the Bill had been abandoned. Now, if our Opposition was justified against the emergency reason, when that was abandoned by the Government itself, surely there was greater justification for continued opposition to the Bill. I say to the Government that when they introduced that Bill they gave only one reason, and according to their own statements, that reason has vanished, and therefore I say the Bill itself should vanish.

Hon. gentlemen opposite say that not only has a specific measure been impeded in its passage through this House, but that public business has been delayed by obstruction practised by hon. gentlemen on this side of the House. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think I can, with all truthfulness, deny that particular assertion. Let me repeat that opposition to one Bill is not obstructing the conduct of public affairs of this Parliament. There is no reason in the world why the Naval Aid Bill should have occupied the time of this Parliament since December 5 to the exclusion of every other piece of public business standing on the Order Paper. There is no reason whatever why a considerable number of the estimates should not have been passed, why we should not have been further advanced in our consideration of the Banking Act, or why the West Indies treaty should not have been long since passed by this House, and sent to the Senate for their consideration. There is no sound or logical reason why we should not have dealt months ago with the Highways Act, and with other important legislation presented by the Government. Therefore, when hon. gentlemen opposite say that we on this side of the House are responsible for impeding public business, they are not justified by the facts, and it is due altogether to themselves.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, the Prime Minister and his followers, base this resolution on the delay of the passage of the Naval Aid Bill. I ask, can they complain? Is that a justification for the res-

lution? I repeat that it is elementary that closure was intended to apply only to measures that have been first submitted to the people, and that have been approved by them. The closure is, and always has been, intended to enable Parliament to carry out the popular will, when the popular will is expressed. The closure can have no other justification or basis. If it has any other basis, it is no other than a piece of tyranny. The Hon. Mr. Fisher was perfectly correct from his standpoint when he said that if the Government were returned after the elections of 1911, they would amend the rules so as to ensure the passage of the reciprocity Bill, because, had the Government been returned, the country would have expressed its will upon the measure, and closure in all countries has been invoked to make sure that the popular will shall not be set aside by obstructive methods on the part of a minority or of any group in any particular parliament. Closure is the people's remedy against obstruction when the people have spoken, I submit with all emphasis, that it never should be used by any government in the way it has been attempted in this case to secure the passage of a measure which has never been submitted to the people, and upon which the people have never expressed an opinion. In England, closure could not live a single day upon any other assumption than the one I have stated. There, it is the weapon used to enforce the will of the people. That has been evidenced in the past two years in that country. It has been used to secure the passage of very important legislation upon which the people had expressed their opinion. It would have been a very serious condition of affairs indeed had it been possible on the part of a minority of the British Parliament to impede the passage of important legislation upon which the people had expressed their will. In 1910 we had in England what is known as the Budget Election, and that election was really decisive as to the position of the House of Lords upon the Veto Bill. It is true that it was not directly the issue; the budget was the prime and direct issue, but it also involved the provisions of the Veto Bill which followed. But the Budget, or Finance Election, as I shall call it, came and passed, and then the Veto measure came up. Mr. Asquith the Prime Minister of Great Britain did not adopt the closure. The Veto Bill was in some sense decided by the election upon the budget of that year, and in a commanding sense the Veto Bill then being considered by the British Parliament had been before the people. But still there had to be another election, and there were two elections in the