

sion at which I have arrived from the enormously rapid increase in the number of newspapers carried through the mails. How does the hon. gentleman account for that? I attribute it, Sir, to the anxiety of the great mass of the people of this country to obtain information. I regard the publication of newspapers as one of the most potent educational influences that the country possesses. I believe that the fact that Canada can boast to-day of having a better informed population among all classes throughout the country than almost any other country throughout the world, is attributable largely to the eagerness with which they look for the information which can only be conveyed to the great mass of the people by newspapers. I do not want to prejudge this question before we come to consider it on its merits; but I want at the outset to throw out for the consideration of the Government that the fact of this enormous increase in the circulation of the newspapers of the country is one of the most potent reasons why the dissemination of knowledge and information in reference to public questions should not be circumscribed by preventing the publication of these newspapers, if that would be the natural result. Now, Sir, I regard the movement on the part of my hon. friend and on the part of the Government as a great compliment to the position which the Liberal-Conservative party occupy to-day. A few years ago, after one or two years of Liberal administration—almost at the commencement—we had an attempt to suppress the "Hansard." Why? Because it was found that the reporting in the "Hansard" of the discussions which took place on public affairs was so detrimental to the position of the Government that they suppressed its publication, and it was only by compulsion that that suppression was removed and the reporting and publishing of the proceedings of the House was again begun. In the same way I regard this attempt at the suppression of the newspapers, and particularly the suppression of the most influential organs of public opinion, because this is a very partial measure. It strikes at the great newspapers of the country, it strikes the great organs of communication between Parliament and the people. The hon. gentleman is willing that any number of insignificant newspapers, which cannot obtain a circulation outside of ten miles from the place of publication, should go free, because he thinks they will not do any great harm. But what this measure strikes the most potent blow at is the dissemination by the press of the proceedings of this House and the discussions of public affairs. I, therefore, take this measure as an indication that the hon. gentleman wants to limit especially the circulation of the leading organs of public sentiment throughout the country and prevent their reaching the mass of the people. Why? Because he

knows that the discussions of Government measures which took place in this House during the last session of Parliament, and especially during this session, are calculated to be most damaging to the party in power, and wishes to prevent, as much as possible, the reports of these discussions reaching the country. The hon. gentleman is aware of what we all know to be the case, that at this moment the people are, to a large extent, in a condition of revolt against the present Administration. That condition is due to the publication by the newspapers of the transactions of this Government in connection with the Crow's Nest Pass Railway, the Drummond Line Railway, and the Yukon Railway, and the discussions thereon. He knows that unless some means can be adopted to prevent the publication of what takes place in this House and its dissemination to the people through the leading journals in the country, which are in a position to do the work, his Government is bound to lose ground every day in public opinion. He therefore asks this House to interpose by an Act of Parliament and cut off communication between the outlying portions of the country and the leading journals of public opinion. The hon. gentlemen pay a poor compliment to the organs of their own party. They, with no unstinted hand, are doing their utmost to sustain hon. gentlemen opposite. But because, with all their efforts, they are unable to maintain the ascendancy of their party, this House is called on to cut off the avenues of communication between this Parliament and those great organs of public sentiment that spread through this country, with all the ability that both parties possess, the facts in relation to public affairs. I look upon the free dissemination of the very class of newspaper which the hon. gentleman proposes to suppress as one of the greatest educational means the country possesses. The very fact that the mails are loaded down, as they are, is evidence of the hunger of the masses for such means of informing their minds and increasing their knowledge of public affairs. I take, therefore, this measure as a great compliment which the Government are paying to the Opposition and to the press that is disseminating throughout the country the discussions that take place in this House and the animadversion of the Opposition upon the conduct and policy of the Government. Hon. gentlemen opposite find these so much to their disadvantage that they wish to suppress these newspapers. I shall not say more at present than express the hope that the hon. gentleman will pause and reconsider his Bill and not seek to prevent the dissemination by the ablest journals in the country, of discussions and facts which are of such great public interest.

Mr. ELLIS. I do not propose to enter upon a discussion of the question as to whether the law should be changed so as to