

far for all that can be gained, even if the Government does gain what it thinks it will. Supposing that that amendment had not been moved; supposing that the right hon. the leader of the Opposition had been treated with the courtesy which his position and long years of experience demanded, what would have happened? He would have moved an amendment, as he had a perfect right to do. Suppose there were fifty amendments, do hon. gentlemen think that my rights as a representative of the people, should be taken away for fear I should move an amendment? There is no answer to it. The members of the Government have made no answer, and the members behind it are not allowed to try to make an answer. I want to press that home, because there are on the other side of the House, able men, trustworthy men, honourable men, and if I were to have a private transaction with them, their word would be as good as their bond. I want to appeal to them as men. If the positions were reversed, and if, a member on this side of the House or the leader of the Opposition rose in his place to attempt to put rules through this House to govern you, and at the same time said, you must not move an amendment, no matter what the rules are, they cannot be changed, hon. gentlemen opposite would rightly protest. Sir, in some countries, that kind of conduct would cause a rebellion instead of a protest in Parliament. I want to press home this point, because I submit that it is perhaps the pith of the whole situation, that this Government is contravening the rights of the members of this House, and that in doing so, it is violating every principle of representative government, where the meanest subject has a right to have a say upon the legislation which is to govern him.

We have been compared to the old land, and let me revert to that for a moment. The conditions in the old land are altogether different from those in Canada, and there is reason for longer discussion in Canada than in the motherland. In the United Kingdom you have a small territory with the people crowded closely together. What happens in the British Parliament in the morning is known practically to every citizen or can be in the evening. For years upon years, centuries upon centuries the population there has been in close contact with public affairs, it is conversant with matters of government. I suppose there are no people in the world who take a more definite and persistent interest in public affairs than do the people of the British Isles. In Canada we have a small population scattered over an im-

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mense territory. There are men in Canada who live many many miles from a railway station, who never see a daily paper, and who are not at all conversant with the affairs of Parliament, and who will not be conversant unless discussion is carried on at some protracted length. Until the people of the country are roused in that respect we cannot hope for some years to confine our debates to the same period of time, which is taken in the mother of parliaments. Another important point is that in the motherland they have a thousand and one minor pieces of legislation to deal with that we in the Parliament of Canada have not to deal with. They have no local governments in the old land. I once sat in the gallery of the British House of Commons and heard a protracted discussion on the early closing of shops. That question would be decided in Canada under a provincial statute, probably giving the municipalities the right to pass early closing by-laws. It would not come to this House at all, but in the mother of parliaments those small questions are debated, and if they were to be debated at length the business would never be completed. As it is, even with the closure, the British Parliament may be said to be practically in constant and continuous session. Then we have another situation, Mr. Speaker, that they did not have in the old land. We entered into Confederation on certain well-defined principles. The working out of that confederation was not an easy task and I fear that sometimes some of us do not give the credit that is due to the men that worked it out. They saw ahead some of the difficulties that have since arisen, some of the problems which we have endeavoured to work out harmoniously, and certain things were provided. The idea which lay at the root of union between the different provinces and which was the basis of their aspirations was conciliation and the protection of minorities in every case. There is no man in this House who more thoroughly appreciates what that meant than you, Mr. Speaker. Men of maturer years know that in working out the basis of Confederation the chief principle kept in view was that the rights of minorities must be protected. The minorities were not all of the same kind. Minorities in Canada have changed, and what was the minority of yesterday is not the minority to-day, and might not be in the future. But that was the underlying principle, and I say that that principle is being evaded and departed from in this resolution before the House. It was thought out, not quickly—it took years of thought by men equal at least to any man in this House—and the Fathers of Confederation decided that majorities