

ment of the day, which was, I will not say an insult to Parliament but an insult to Canada, an arrangement was arrived at so that the vote on the second reading was taken. Then came the committee stage of the Bill. It might have been expected that the attitude of the Government during the debate on the second reading would be amended when the Bill came into committee so that the information and explanations that they had refused on the second reading would be forthcoming in committee. That is the usual course with the most insignificant private Bill; it receives consideration and explanation in Committee of the Whole. But the Government of the day saw fit, instead of acceding to the custom of Parliament, instead of recognizing the purpose for which the House sits in Committee of the Whole, again refused, specifically and deliberately refused, either to bring forward the information that was wanted or to substantiate as correct the information that they had brought forward. Was it the duty of members who sit on this side of the House representing, within a fraction, one-half of the people of Canada, to ask for full information and full explanation? Would they have been right if they had not asked for full information and explanation? Would they not have been absolutely and palpably wrong if they had not done so? And to that demand, which was made in the name of the whole people of Canada by those who represent nearly one-half of the Dominion of Canada, the answer of the Government was the answer of physical force: You must sit continuously until you pass that clause. When the ultimatum was issued, I submit that there was only one course for the members of the Opposition to pursue. They were not prepared to abdicate their functions as the parliamentary representatives of a free people. I need not call your attention to the fact, Mr. Speaker, that the second clause of the Bill is not yet passed; and I say here and now that it should never be passed unless and until the Government gives to this House that information in regard to their policy and its details to which the country is absolutely and unquestionably entitled. But there was something more than merely compelling the House to sit in continuous session. There was something more than the application or the exercise of physical force. While we have, under the rules, a chairman of committee, duly elected and salaried by Parliament, responsible for the decisions which he gives, we had placed in the Chair from time to time members of Parliament without that responsibility. We had decisions by those members of Parliament on points of order upheld by the Government majority. May I be permitted

to say, Mr. Speaker, that during twenty-four hours there was a deliberate attempt by the Government of the day, backed by their majority, with no greater authority than that of a fraction of the people of this country over those represented by the Opposition, to carry that project by means of the misapplication of the rules of this House, and without giving information?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is going too far. He seems to me to be imputing motives, which is not allowable, as well as questioning the action of the House, which can only be done by giving notice and by bringing it to the attention of the House. In both those respects I think the hon. member's remarks are out of order.

Mr. OLIVER: I did not imagine, Mr. Speaker, that I was trespassing. If I am, I wish to place myself in order. I was stating what I understood to be facts not subject to dispute. I wish to be understood as placing myself entirely under your ruling, and I will not discuss that point further. But I may be permitted to point out that as a last effort to pass this Bill in committee, the Chairman ignored the rules of the House, and undertook to give a ruling while a member had the floor. I make these allusions not for the purpose of casting reflections at all but to bring out a condition in rebuttal of the contention of the Government that the Opposition has unduly exercised its prerogative of discussion in the House. I want to establish beyond question the point that coercion was attempted by the Government, and that it was not until it was attempted and continued that it was met by obstruction on the part of the Opposition. May I point out that in regard to these very resolutions that are now under discussion, a rule of Parliament has been invoked that had not been invoked within the quarter of a century before, and that rule was brought into play by the application or use of a rule that had never been invoked before in the history of this Parliament. It is true that these rules are in the book; it is true that hon. members had the power to use these rules, for the purpose they had in view. But you know, Mr. Speaker, and this Parliament knows, that rules are placed there for certain purposes, and it is thoroughly realized that the rules of Parliament up to the present time have been for the purpose of regulating, and not of prohibiting discussion; that when these rules were applied, as they have been applied, their application was unprecedented, and to that extent was an infringement upon the rights and liberties of this House. And when, not only was the application of these rules made, but my hon. friends boasted of it, and declared that it was for