

even for the benefit of those who support the Government unless they are to be ranked hereafter as mere automatons, without any judgment and without any opinions upon public questions. Hon. members of this House on both sides are to be fettered and hampered hereafter for the benefit of the thirteen or fourteen gentlemen who, for the time being, happen to compose the Government of this country. I would like those gentlemen who talk about Parliament discussing public questions so much to tell me whether free discussion in Parliament has not frequently stopped injurious legislation that might have injured this country in many ways. I want him to compare that result with the other alleged result as to the important legislation it might have postponed, and I want to say that the balance will be found on the side of the fact that discussion has prevented injurious legislation being passed by this Parliament. What victories have not been won in this and other parliaments as the result of free speech? Look at the achievements in the Mother Country, the acts which have been placed upon the statute book, the reforms, the means of civilization and all those advancements which are the pride of every son of the Empire. Were they not the result of free speech? Were they not, in many cases, the result of the advocacy of reform before closure came in the Parliament of the Mother Country and was not that advocacy only possible as a result of the rules then in existence which permitted of the placing of the facts and the arguments before the people of England? So it has been in Canada.

There will be a loss of the rights of the people by the application of this gag method which this hon. gentleman proposes putting through. These are important considerations and they may have been lost sight of perhaps in the haste and hurry of a party debate and in the eagerness of the Government to rid itself of the opposition which has been developed with the utmost sincerity and the utmost belief in the righteousness of the cause on the part of hon. gentlemen on this side of the House. All these considerations will be swept away for the moment, but they cannot die and if crushed they will rise again. Let me give one or two illustrations. The wisdom of the fathers of Confederation placed in the British North America Act, for the protection of minorities in this country, certain safeguards. If hon. gentlemen, who to-day scorn the privileges and rights embodied in the British North America Act, had been there at the time of Confederation no rights of minorities would ever have been considered by

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them. But the men of that day did consider them and, having considered them, they placed them there, and they have remained there ever since protected by this Parliament of Canada under the rules which have been in existence and which were placed there very largely by the men who brought about Confederation. If at any time a majority, elected as the result of appeals to passion or prejudice in this country under these new rules which they have introduced to fetter and bind this Parliament, choose to do so, they could sweep away in a week every guard, every protection placed there for the preservation of our national life with regard to the rights of minorities.

The pitiful part of it is that this Government are using the minority that they have tied to their chariot wheels and using them upon this very question. Although that minority were elected in direct opposition to the policy for which they have voted, the Government are using them to take away the rights of minorities for ever in this country. A peculiar spectacle never before witnessed in any British legislature is here presented to us that the men who compose the minority in this country will be found writing their own death warrant, signing the repeal of the Act under which they and their forefathers have stood for the last century and whose rights are from this time onward imperilled if the majority in this country choose to take them away. That is what they are doing to-night. That will be the result when this closure will have been passed and some of these gentlemen will be able to see the results of their action. Some of us will live to see in Canada, the results of the vote that they will give under this coalition Government with which they have allowed themselves to become associated, for closure and the strangulation of the right of free speech.

I have pointed out to you, Mr. Speaker, that one of the great privileges of Parliament, in the interests of the people, has been the liberty to come here for the remedying of grievances. I have pointed out how these rights are to be curtailed and how they are being taken away. Henceforth freedom of action, except within the narrow lines laid down in these four resolutions, and independence of thought, are to be prostituted to the demands of a party machine. From to-night the Canadian Tammany Hall machine is to make the decrees which a shackled Parliament is to register. Government of the people, by the people and for the people has been the proud boast of those of us who live on the northern half of this continent. So long have they enjoyed these privileges and rights that the people have forgotten from whence they came and