

Government. And yet I do not know that they have had a revolution in Great Britain; I have not heard that a mob is in control of the House; I have not heard that free speech has been smothered; I believe that they have good government in Great Britain to-day. Closure was applied daily; as often as twice a day; as often as three times a day; as often as five times a day; and this by the Liberal Government of Britain. And I affirm, and I invite contradiction, that there is nothing made possible by the extreme exercise of the rules introduced by the right hon. the leader of this Government that is not made possible in a stronger way under the British rules. I ask for a single instance. What is made possible by the exercise of the extreme authority of the majority here that cannot be brought about under the British rules? Absolutely nothing. These hon. gentlemen talk about shutting off debate at two o'clock. Why, under the British rules they can shut off debate at any minute. In the British House they can move amendments, and those amendments need not be debated except at the mercy of the majority. They do not even need to be put to the House except at the discretion of the chairman. The chairman can take a list of the amendments and say: I strike out the first one, but I take the second, because it seems to have some common sense in it, and I will let the House vote on it. I strike out three, four and five, and I come to the sixth; I will take that and put it to a vote. That is within the power of the Chairman under the British rules; is that within the power of the Chairman of the majority under these rules? Not at all. I again assert that even the extremists exercise of power, within the imagination of hon. gentlemen opposite does not cover a single instance under these rules that cannot be covered under the British rules. Hon. gentlemen say: It is true you have offered us the British rules, but you know that it is absurd to offer us these rules, because we have not a permanent Speaker. The right hon. leader of the Government has said: If the Opposition, any time after these rules are put in force, think they would prefer the British rules, they are welcome to them. They do not need to say they prefer the British rules to the rules as now existing without amendment; all they need say is: We prefer the British rules to these rules you have now enforced. If the Opposition at any time take the stand that the rules of the British House are more palatable to them than these rules, they can have them; that is a standing offer, and so long as hon. gentlemen in this House get up and say they will not avail themselves of this offer, they are proclaiming—and there is no getting away from it—that they know these rules are more lenient than the British rules.

I again ask hon. gentlemen to tell us what rules they proposed to introduce to close debate? What were the rules that they formulated?

Mr. PUGSLEY: The late Government did not decide to introduce closure.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I am asking the hon. member if they were formulated.

Mr. GRAHAM: Never.

Mr. PUGSLEY: They were never considered by council.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Oh, what must the hon. member for Rouville (Mr. Lemieux) think of the hon. member for St. John! I may tell the hon. member for St. John that the hon. member for Rouville is not the man to go down to St. Hyacinthe and say to the people that the Government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier would pass a closure measure if returned to office if he did not have the authority of council to do so. Has the hon. gentleman stated that such rules were not formulated by the late Government?

Mr. PUGSLEY: I said they were not.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We will have to wait for the developments of time. In the light of what the hon. member for Rouville has said; in the light of what the late Minister of Agriculture has said; in the light of the words of the late Minister of Justice, who would himself have formulated the rules if they were formulated; in the light of these facts I am compelled to say that there is no logical conclusion possible in my mind except that the rules were formulated, whatever they were.

In the past we may have erred on both sides. So long as you have fixed and defined rules of parliament, and so long as under these rules you have party government, it is inevitable, while human nature remains as it is, that this party or that will take advantage of those rules for its own aggrandisement, but that is no reason why a strong government, when it attains office, should not so amend those rules as to make it impossible for any party, no matter how determined its attitude may be, in the past we may have erred on both sides, to so abuse the principles of government as to defeat the will of the people and the progress of useful legislation. The duty of the Government is clear. We have to decide whether or not we shall proclaim our cause as hopeless at the hands of an Opposition hungry for office and burning with lust for power; whether we shall have to admit that we are going to lie here 'in cold obstruction and to rot' or whether we propose to purge this Parliament of 'this obstruction which begins to stop our very veins of life'. Let us look at what was done by a greater parliament than this after