

orities, as consisting of three classes, the passing of legislation, the granting of supplies, and the remedying of grievances. Lord Palmerston, a Prime Minister of England, speaking in 1861 on a question that was before the Imperial Parliament said:

This House has another function to discharge, and one highly conducive to the public interests—namely that of being the mouth-piece of the nation, the organ by which all opinions, all complaints, all motions of grievances, all hopes and expectations, all wishes and suggestions which may arise among the people at large, may be brought to an expression, may be discussed, examined, answered, rejected, or redressed. This I hold to be as important a function as the other two—namely, legislation and granting of supplies.

What is the situation before this House? It is that this Government has introduced a resolution with the view of enabling them to pass a Bill the reason for which and the nature and effect of which I will discuss later, which is absolutely destructive of the rights of the people of Canada and of their representatives in this House in regard to the granting of supplies and the remedying of grievances, two functions which hon. members of the two parties that comprise this Parliament have to discharge, because they are here to express the views of their constituents and to lay their grievances before this court of appeal. By means of the rules which are the result of the wisdom and usage to which I have referred, they have always been accorded those privileges and those full rights which the present Government propose to take away in order to enable them to place a piece of legislation on the statute books. That is the position in which we stand. Is it important that the right to ventilate the grievances of the people should be respected in this House? Is that one of the purposes for which Parliament meets, or is it not? What are we here for? Is it to register the decrees of the Government of the day from time to time in regard to legislation which they may choose to introduce? Or has every hon. member here the right to act as a representative of the people and with absolute freedom under the proper safeguards laid down by the wisdom of parliamentarians for ages, to ventilate the grievances of the people before Parliament? This has always been the supreme tribunal of the nation to which all grievances come. It is the political court of appeal which has absolute jurisdiction, and before which the humblest and the highest in this land can be arraigned.

By this closure my hon. friends opposite are attempting to prevent the possibility of the people asserting their right to have

if necessary the arraignment before this tribunal of the highest man in the land whose political career and misdeeds should be investigated. Let me say, Sir, that the consciousness that this right existed uncurtailed and unhampered in this Parliament is fully present in the minds of the people. As Canada has developed the consciousness and the certainty of that right and jurisdiction have increased; it comes to every man who enters Canada, and it has been the great pride of our people. If these functions of Parliament are to be insidiously destroyed by the methods which hon. gentlemen opposite propose, in order to gratify a mere whim of their own, although the people of Canada have been quiescent because they knew as a matter of certainty that those rights existed, they will speedily realize the effects of the application of the principles which hon. gentlemen opposite are seeking to introduce, they will realize that their freedom has gone and that their right to ventilate their grievances has forever disappeared. My hon. friend the Minister of Finance says that the people on the streets are asking 'what are you talking about down there, why don't you do more?' I would like to know what the people of this country would ever know about public questions if there were no discussion in Parliament. If the regular Speaker had been in the Chair I should have liked to remind him of the time when he stood on the floor of this Parliament in 1896, and did what he thought was right in opposing the efforts of the Government of the day to impose coercion, as he would have called it, on Manitoba, and I should have liked to ask him whether the people of Canada would ever have heard what was involved in that question if he had not stood on the floor of Parliament and talked as he did, bringing before them the real issue. I would like to know of any great question which ever was understood by the people of Canada except by discussion in Parliament. It is all very well for office seekers and others who are looking for favours from hon. gentlemen opposite to say: 'Why don't you stop talking down there?' But if the public interests of this country the freedom of debate, the priceless heritage of justice and right which has come down to us through generations are to be swept away, to please office seekers and patronage hunters, then Canada indeed has fallen upon evil days.

What does this proposition do? It fetters every hon. member in this House and will fetter every hon. member who may come into this House unless the rule is repealed. It is for the benefit of the few men who happen to be in the Government of the country for the time being, and it is not