

I am positive that one was. That being the case, the putting of the question was the immediate point of business before the Committee of the Whole. You entered the Chair, Mr. Speaker, which meant that you entered it under the initial authority of the action of the Speaker, referred to in May, in 1675, who had taken the Chair on that occasion to bring the House into order. At page 367 of May it is stated:

The mace was laid upon the table; the disorder ceased; and the Speaker stated that it was to bring the House into order again. . . . that he had taken the Chair.

That being your purpose, and that purpose being your justification, then, you were entitled to do all such things as were necessary to bring the House to order. The precise business before the House was the putting of that question; consequently, until that immediate point of business should be resumed, you were simply fulfilling your duty in bringing the House to order. So, I argue that you were quite within your rights in asking that the question be put because it was the clear and undisputed intention of the Chairman to put the question. But, even supposing that you were wrong and that you had not authority to order the question put, would the result be anything fatal? The only result would be that the Chairman would not be bound to obey your injunction. Your remarks would be a nullity or they would be what are ordinarily known as a surplusage. There would be no invasion of rights and if the Chairman was not justified in putting the question, he could not plead that he was fortified in doing so by the order of the Speaker.

Mr. EMMERSON: The Speaker could have named him in that case.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Speaker had not the power to name anybody that I am referring to now.

Mr. EMMERSON: Supposing the Chairman had not obeyed the order?

Mr. MEIGHEN: If hon. gentlemen will not agree to my first argument that it was part of the duty of the Speaker to direct that the point of order that was before the committee should be decided, then I say that, even if we concede them to be right in that, the effect is only that the Chairman is not bound by what the Speaker says beyond the purview of his power.

Mr. PUGSLEY: What would be the result on the Chairman of disobeying the order of the Speaker?

Mr. MEIGHEN: If hon. gentlemen argue that the Speaker has no power to make the order the effect would be nil.

Mr. EMMERSON: If the Speaker, not being in the Chair properly, named an hon.

Mr. MEIGHEN.

member, the hon. gentleman contends that he is not naming him.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not know what the hon. gentleman is trying to get at. Nothing can be clearer than that Mr. Speaker was in the Chair properly and, being in the Chair with authority, he had a right to be obeyed, and in consequence of any hon. member disregarding the Chair, he was subject to being named. But so far as your conduct, Mr. Speaker, in insisting upon the continuance of the procedure upon which the committee was engaged when the disorder arose, is concerned, you acted within your clear duty in ordering that it be resumed and that the business of the committee be got under way before you left the Chair. So far from anything out of the way having been done on the part of yourself, Mr. Speaker, on Saturday night the 15th March, I contend that under the very extraordinary circumstances, you did what was your clear duty and that you acted within the rules and usages of this House and that, so far from being obliquely censured by hon. gentlemen opposite, it is much more in line with their duty to pay you that respect and gratitude which you on that occasion, as on many others, made yourself entitled to.

Mr. HUGH GUTHRIE (South Wellington): Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted to express an opinion, it would be that the hon. member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Meighen) has entirely misapprehended the nature of the matter which my hon. friend from Westmorland (Mr. Emmerson), has seen fit to bring before the House. My hon. friend from Westmorland was most careful to inform the House that, in bringing this matter up for discussion, he had no intention to censure or criticise any action of Your Honour, but merely to ascertain for the future what was to be the recognized procedure of this House in the event of a repetition of the scenes which prevailed in this Chamber on Saturday evening, the 15th of March. The hon. member for Portage la Prairie has gone very wide of the mark and has occupied the time of the House in tilting against windmills by seeking to apologize for and uphold some action of your honour that has not been attacked by anyone on this side of the House. I would say, Mr. Speaker, at the outset that, under normal conditions, I would hesitate merely to express any opinion of my own in regard to the business of this House where my opinion might come in conflict with any opinion or action of yours in regard to the procedure in this Chamber. We all realize that the conditions which prevailed in the Chamber on Saturday, the 15th of March, were decidedly abnormal.