

the forms and rules of proceeding, which have been adopted as they were found necessary from time to time, and have become the law of the house ; by a strict adherence to which, the weaker party can only be protected from those irregularities and abuses, which these forms were intended to check, and which the wantonness of power is but too often apt to suggest to large and successful majorities. 2. HATS. 171. 172.

And whether these forms be in all cases the most rational or not, is really not of so great importance. It is much more material that there should be a rule to go by, than what that rule is ; that there may be an uniformity of proceeding in business, not subject to the caprice of the Speaker, or captiousness of the members. It is very material that order, decency and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body. 2. HATS. 149.

SECTION II.

Privilege.—The privileges of the members of parliament, from small and obscure beginnings, have been advancing for centuries with a firm and never yielding pace. Claims seem to have been brought forward from time to time, and repeated, till some example of their admission enabled them to build law on that example. We can only therefore state the point of progression at which they now are. It is now acknowledged, 1st. That they are at all times exempted from question elsewhere for any thing said in their own house ; that during the time of privilege, 2. neither a member himself, his* wife, or his servants. [familiares sui] for any matter of their own, may

* Ord. of the House of Commonst 1663. July 16.