

the previous question was more necessary than it was in this case.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I answer my hon. friend courteously and I say that in my judgment it was entirely unnecessary and entirely unjustifiable.

Mr. MEIGHEN: My hon. friend did not answer the question at all. I asked him to devise in the amplitude of his ingenuity any possible case where the previous question could be necessary if it was not necessary here, and also to devise any possible event or any possible contingency that might have been in the mind of his hon. leader when he inserted rule 17 in the form in which it now stands in the rules, if it was not just to cover such a case as this.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I will answer my hon. friend again. The previous question was invented for the purpose of avoiding a decision on the main motion, never for such a purpose as that for which it was applied.

Mr. MEIGHEN: My hon. friend has now elevated himself into the position of a reviewer of Sir Thomas Erskine May. Sir Thomas Erskine May says that the purpose of the previous question in England is two-fold—he is discussing conditions in England—first of all to avoid the decision on the main question and next to prevent amendments. I read it no later than this forenoon. In England, what is the previous question? Not that the question be now put, but that the question be not now put, and that is the reason that in England it has the two-fold purpose. In Canada, the previous question takes the form that the question be now put, so that its clear purpose is only to prevent amendments. That at all events was the only purpose in this case. In what possible circumstance could rule 17, which on the 9th of July the right hon. leader of the Opposition took under his eye and said: It does not suit me in its present form, because it is debatable; I want it not debatable and I amend it and put it in that form—in what possible circumstances could it be used except in just such a contingency as it was used in last week? Is it an advantage that the hon. member for North Ontario (Mr. Sharpe) should speak before the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) under ordinary circumstances? Why, no; as every one knows, if there is an advantage to one speaker in this House over another, it is the advantage of coming after him, not of coming before him. So that the only imaginary contingency where there could be any practical use of rule 17 is just such an event as occurred last week when it had to be exercised in order that the previous question might be moved and this resolu-

tion rescued from the turmoil of indefinite and interminable obstruction.

The hon. member for South Wellington, who, I presume, in terror of the operation of these rules has taken refuge somewhere outside the House, conjured up the very destruction of Confederation by the extreme exercise of these rules. Inasmuch as he said that could be done—although it could not be done—inasmuch as there was possible, he said, the disbandment of our army, the destruction of the transcontinental, the taxation to death of our banks, &c., therefore we should shrink from this position, because we will be under turmoil and mob rule as soon as it goes into force. I should like to direct the attention of the hon. member for South Wellington to the real condition in this country at the present moment, and I will show him under no less an authority than Bagehot in his work on the English constitution that at the present time there rests in the Crown just such awful authority as he is afraid to vest in the Parliament of this country. What is it? After reciting what may be done, Bagehot says:

Recent discussions have also brought into curious prominence another part of the constitution. I said in this book that it would very much surprise people if they were only told how many things the Queen could do without consulting Parliament, and it certainly has so proved, for when the Queen abolished Purchase in the army by an Act of prerogative (after the Lords had rejected the bill for doing so), there was a great and general astonishment.

But this is nothing to what the Queen can by law do without consulting Parliament. Not to mention other things, she could disband the army (by law she can engage more than a certain number of men, but she is not obliged to engage any men); she could dismiss all the officers, from the General Commanding-in-Chief downwards; she could dismiss all the sailors too; she could sell off all our ships of war—

Even, Sir, the Niobe and the Rainbow.

—and all our naval stores; she could make a peace by the sacrifice of Cornwall and begin a war for the conquest of Brittany. She could make every citizen in the United Kingdom, male or female, a Peer; she could make every parish in the United Kingdom a 'university'; she could dismiss most of the civil servants; she could pardon all offenders.

That is what the Queen, or the King now, is empowered to do under the constitution of this country.

Mr. PUGSLEY: He would not like to endeavour to do it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: No, nor would any sensible government. This is a case, this determined obstruction of hon. gentlemen opposite, where it is excellent to have the strength of a giant, though it may be tyrannous to use it like a giant. Now, hon. gentlemen opposite are very much