

During my occupancy of the Chair the practice has been, with few exceptions, to give the third reading at the same sitting. I have, however, but followed the practice of my predecessor, for in the session of 1894, out of 46 private Bills which were reported without amendment, 45 were read a third time at the same sitting as they were reported, and only one was postponed to a later day.

The whole matter is in the hands of the minority after all. On the question being asked whether the Bill be now read a third time, a full debate can be had, and amendments can be moved as to the time of reading. It is unnecessary to suggest what other parliamentary rights may be invoked by a minority who may be determined to postpone any question that is before the House.

It is most improbable, therefore, that any one desiring the early passage of a Bill will try to press on a third reading, if it be against the wishes of any considerable number of members.

The provision which permits the third reading to take place at once, after a Bill has passed committee without amendment, seems to me to be based on the sound reason that the House has just had unlimited opportunity to consider and debate every clause of the Bill in Committee of the Whole.

My conclusion is that the course which I adopted as to this Bill was in accordance both with the rules and practice of this House.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

The House again resolved itself in committee on Bill (No. 71) further to amend the Weights and Measures Act.

(In the Committee.)

The MINISTER OF INLAND REVENUE (Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinière). If I am not mistaken, there is only one section in this Bill which has not been passed in the Committee of the Whole House. I refer to the second section which has been left standing, as a great many amendments are to be proposed by some of the hon. members on different questions affecting the regulations contained in the Bill. I will mention just a few of them: The weight of a bag of potatoes, the weight of a bushel of lime, the contents of a milk can, the contents of an apple barrel, the contents of canned goods, the weight of a barrel of cement, abolishing the practice, which has given rise to so much complaint among the farmers of Ontario, of using testers in order to find out the price to be paid by the millers for wheat. I am waiting to hear what arguments my hon. friends who have given notice of these amendments will bring in support of theirs.

Mr. FORTIN. As will be remembered, I introduced a Bill with the object of amending the Weights and Measures Act with re-

gard to the sale of potatoes by the bag. That Bill has passed its second reading, and was called the other day on the Order paper for consideration in Committee of the Whole House. By request of the Minister of Inland Revenue, it was allowed to stand in order that the object of the Bill might be embodied in the Bill submitted by the Government. I have already explained the reasons which commend to my mind the measure which I proposed to the House. I have stated that the practice of selling potatoes by the bag is universal, more particularly in the old provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Now, the Weights and Measures Act contains no provision by which the standard of that measure is determined. There are provisions regarding the standard of a bushel, there are provisions regarding the standard of hay or straw when these products are sold by the bundle; there are provisions determining the standard of a barrel of apples; and there is a certain statute which was passed in 1888 making special provisions for the standard of a bag of salt, determining how many pounds should constitute a bag of salt. Now, if it was found useful or even necessary to determine the standards of those various measures, I see no reason why such a standard should not be adopted with regard to one of the most important articles of produce of the farm—I mean potatoes. Therefore, I take it for granted that as a matter of principle the measure which I now propose as an amendment to the present Bill, should commend itself to the members of this committee. Now, as regards the question of practical utility, it seems to me beyond dispute that the absence of any provision to that effect is a cause of inconvenience. In the absence of such a law, municipalities avail themselves of their powers to enact by-laws; and we have already pointed out that one by-law was enacted by the city of Montreal, determining the standard for that kind of measurement. Although it is questionable whether the city of Montreal or any other municipal corporation has power to pass such by-laws, as there might be some doubts, I think the best and most useful way to dispose of the question is to make a provision in the Weights and Measures Act that is now before the committee. I may mention that it has been stated in this House during my absence that nobody ever demanded the adoption of such a measure, that there have been no farmers' institutes calling for such legislation, that no board of trade has demanded the same. Since this measure was introduced I have received almost daily resolutions adopted by various municipal corporations and letters from other public bodies, endorsing the principle of the Bill. Perhaps the committee will allow me to quote some of those resolutions. I hold in my hand a resolution adopted by the municipal coun-