

bers of the House. The object is to limit debate and to take away from present members and those who come after us precious liberties which have existed for a long time. The intention of the first clause is to take away the right that we have to debate motions for adjournment. At the end of this clause, these words have been added:

But all other motions shall be decided without debate or amendment.

It remains in actual practice to ascertain what this amendment really means. Several of the older members of this House, who are present, I am sure would not like to lay down in black and white how this rule would work out in practice, because parliamentary rules, which seem perfectly good in theory, when they come to be put into practice, are sometimes found to be very difficult of application. The intention of the Government is clear. It is to limit debate on motions for adjournment and on all other motions which shall be decided without debate or amendment, except those which are mentioned in the body of this amendment. The second clause is to the same effect. The most important part of the second amendment is the last part of it after the part referring to notice of a motion that debate shall not be postponed beyond the subsequent sitting, it is proposed to add the following:

If such adjourned debate or postponed consideration shall not have been resumed or concluded before two of the clock in the morning, no member shall rise to speak after that hour, but all such questions as must be decided in order to conclude such adjourned debate or postponed consideration, shall be decided forthwith.

This means that any member of the Ministry may at any time give notice that he will move at a subsequent sitting of the House, the application of this rule. He may do that; he may be animated by the best intentions; we give him the benefit of the doubt. Circumstances, however, may be such that he may move to apply this rule at two o'clock, or a few minutes before two, and we will witness the spectacle of perhaps some much debated question, important or unimportant, being passed through under this rule which has been styled, in England, the rule of the guillotine. This is one of the most serious changes that could be made in our Parliamentary procedure. It is one which should not have been made, according to my experience in this House, without having been given the fullest consideration possible by members on both sides of the House, because if the rules are to be properly observed, they should be accepted by both of the great political parties. The

Mr. MARCIL (Bonaventure).

enforcement of the law is an easy matter when the law is made by the consent of the governed, but in this case the rule is proposed to be made by a fairly large majority in this House and I am afraid it would not be binding on the minority. If the minority have to submit they will not submit, not avec bonne grace, but because there is no other course open to them. It must not be forgotten that an Opposition under the British Parliamentary system are here to protect the public interest. The people confides the administration of public affairs to the Government, but they appoint, at the same time, the Opposition to watch over the proper discharge of those duties and if the Opposition has put up a proper fight in a session which on next Sunday will have reached a duration of five months, it must not be forgotten that this fight has been put up in the public interest and it would be a great misfortune for Canada or for any country governed by the British system, if at any time, it should be without an opposition because an opposition is the best guarantee the public has of a proper administration of affairs. The Government may be recruited from one party at one time and from another at another time, but the duties that it fulfils in the House are duties which have been imposed on it by the public and those duties the Opposition endeavour to fulfil to the best of their ability.

The third subsection which it is proposed to add to this rule is also intended to limit the freedom of speech in a sense, to limit the opportunity that the members of the Opposition or, in fact, any members of the House now have, of bringing up grievances when we go into Supply. It is the oldest maxim of the British Parliamentary law that no Supply is to be granted to the Crown till grievances have been aired and ventilated. It is proposed here that on Thursday and Friday, two days in the week, Mr. Speaker shall leave the Chair without putting the question. That means that two days will be lost in every week and in the commencement of the session, for the first four weeks when only three days are given up to Government business, the Opposition, or any member having any grievance to ventilate before voting Supply to the Crown will be reduced to one day a week in which to bring it before the House. That is contrary to the practice that has been followed in this House and is altogether contrary to the public interest. I have no right, under the rules of the House, to impute motives to the Administration or to question the motives of the Premier who has introduced this measure, but I may be allowed to look at the facts as they are. We have been seventy-three days in