

endeavour always, as I have said, to hold the scales evenly as between the two contentious parties in this House. So with the Deputy Speaker; that is why years ago it was provided that there should be a permanent Deputy Speaker, who should be Chairman of the Committees of Ways and Means, the Committee of Supply and generally the chairman of committee on Government Bills. The principle was that he should always endeavour to remove himself above party, so that the minority in the House, as well as the majority, might be able to look upon his decisions with some degree of confidence. How much more important it is that these decisions should be given either by the Speaker or by the permanent Chairman of the committee when we consider that there is no appeal to you, Sir, from any erroneous decision which the Chairman might give. If there were an appeal to you, you would feel bound to look into the authorities, and your judgment would become of record, and would form a precedent for future Speakers to act upon. But under the rules of this House an appeal from the decision of the Chairman is not made to you, Sir, but to the House, and the decision of the Chairman is invariably sustained. There is no opportunity for discussion; no opportunity to argue the matter with the majority; no opportunity of presenting authorities to them, but an appeal is, without discussion, immediately taken to the House, and a partisan decision, confirming the ruling of the Chairman of the committee, is given. Do you not see, Sir, how important it is, if the Chairman is to have the confidence of all the members of this House, that all decisions which affect any such important matters—the rights of the minority of this House and the rights of the people of this country whom they represent—should be given by permanent chairmen, and not by chairmen who may be selected upon the spur of the moment, and who come to the Chair influenced by all those partisan motives which influence hon. gentlemen upon the floor of this House.

And what next took place in connection with this matter? The hon. member for Peel (Mr. Blain) was in the Chair. I do not know how he got there—

Mr. BLAIN: How does my hon. friend think I got there?

Mr. PUGSLEY: I would like to know by what authority he chose a member of this House to take his place? After the amendment of my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition and the sub-amendment moved by the hon. member for North Cape Breton (Mr. McKenzie) had both been ruled out of order, there being an apparent attempt on the part of hon. gentlemen opposite

to shut off discussion, and after there was, apparently at the instance of the hon. Minister of Public Works, a determination evidenced to take a vote, by hook or by crook, within the law or outside the law, in accordance with the rules or against the rules of this House, on the second clause of the Bill then under discussion, by Saturday night, my hon. friend for Peel left the Chair, and then without your authority, Sir, or the authority of the Deputy Speaker, my hon. friend from Kent (Mr. Robidoux), took his place. The discussion went on, and the point of order was raised as to his right to be in the Chair. I argued the matter, and I was able to submit to the House, the opinion of so old a parliamentarian as yourself, Sir, given in 1896, that even the Deputy Speaker had no authority to appoint a member to take his place. I am always glad to give the authority of strong and experienced parliamentarians in favour of any point which I raise, and in this case our position was infinitely stronger because of the fact that it was not the Deputy Speaker who had appointed the hon. member for Kent to the Chair, but the hon. member for Peel had sent for the hon. member for Kent at the very instant when that hon. gentleman was on his way for the purpose of taking the Chair. What inference, Mr. Speaker, would you draw from that fact? Would you think it was merely a synchronism, to use the language of the Finance Minister, that the hon. member for Kent should be walking down to take the Chair at the very instant when the hon. member for Peel was about to rise to enable him to do so, and was sending for him? Would you not come to the conclusion, particularly in view of what had taken place, and in view of the intention of the Government that by some means the second clause of the Bill then under discussion should be passed before the committee rose, that there was an understanding that the hon. member for Kent at a certain hour should take the Chair?

Mr. BLAIN: Why does not my hon. friend accept my statement in regard to that question made in the House a few days ago?

Mr. PUGSLEY: I have accepted my hon. friend's statement. My hon. friend says that he was about to send for the hon. member for Kent when that hon. gentleman suddenly appeared for the purpose of taking the Chair, and that is also the statement of the hon. member for Kent. He stated that he had come down for the purpose of taking the Chair before he had learned that the hon. member for Peel had sent for him. It is true—and I say it in justice to my hon. friend—that the hon. member for Peel stated that the reason