

Mr. PUGSLEY: If you cannot do it you should not apply the guillotine.

Mr. MEIGHEN: And instead we place the responsibility directly upon the shoulders of the Government who are responsible to the people of the country, and furthermore we say that no government can at any time, even after debate, say that debate must close, but must give twenty-four hours' notice and allow reasonable debate even after that. That is the safeguard we apply. Now, I would like to know from hon. gentlemen opposite whether in the closure they intended to pass they were going to import the British discretion which is left to the Speaker, or were they going to introduce such closure as we now propose. Will the hon. member for St. John tell us that? Will the hon. member for South Renfrew who was in favour of closure once upon a time when his Government was in power, tell us whether they intended to give that discretion to the Speaker?

Mr. GRAHAM: Where has the hon. gentleman authority for the statement that I was in favour of closure?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Right here in front of me. Here is what the hon. member (Mr. Graham) said at Port Hope on the 12th of September, 1911; he will remember the speech.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Here is what he said:

Under the present rules of the House of Commons business that could be done in three months was extended to nine months. He strongly favoured amending the rules.

Mr. GRAHAM: Hear, hear; I do not change that one iota if the rules are amended in a proper way.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. member is now in opposition and he wants the rules amended so that he could drive a coach and four through them; that would be the proper way to amend the rules for him now.

Mr. GRAHAM: My hon. friend will now take back his statement that I was in favour of closure and that he had the authority before him to show that I was.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I have nothing at all to take back. I tell the hon. gentleman that if he is going to provide that business which took nine months in the House of Commons should only take three months, by amending the rules as he said he was, and as he now admits he said, he could do it by closure and by nothing else. That was my hon. friend's opinion. He says: they can shut out debate, and, worst of all, they can shut out amendments. He says: These rights are the very bulwarks of the

Mr. MEIGHEN.

Opposition and rules that would make it possible to shut out amendments and to shut out debate are the worst things which I have ever heard of; they have destroyed parliamentary government and made it the government of the mob. Let me tell the hon. member for South Renfrew and the hon. member for South Wellington that by the extreme exercise, but by the perfectly correct exercise of the present rules that are the very epitome of perfection according to the leader of the Opposition, you can shut out amendments and shut out debate to your heart's content. Let me show hon. gentlemen how it can be done.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Then why apply the guillotine?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Because it is not the reasonable interpretation of the rules, nor are the extreme cases cited by the hon. member for South Wellington the reasonable interpretation of these proposed rules. Under the present rules, whenever there is a motion before you, Mr. Speaker, we can immediately have the previous question moved and you can shut out every amendment. Those are the rules of the House as they stand to-day. The leader of the Opposition says that the best rules in the British House of Commons are such rules that the majority can entirely shut out amendments. We are exactly in the position so terribly deplored by the hon. member for South Wellington; but you can shut out debate by the minority as well if you want to. How do you do it? Just as soon as a member opposite rises to speak, somebody on this side rises and we move that our man be heard. That is our rule to-day; that is in the rules to-day and they are not debatable, thanks to the judgment of the leader of the Opposition himself, so that by a weapon forged by the leader of the Opposition we are to-day able to do the very extreme so much deplored by the hon. member for South Renfrew and the hon. member for South Wellington. No Government would do it.

Mr. GRAHAM: They have done it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Under extreme circumstances, the rule could be applied.

Mr. PUGSLEY: You did it the other day.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Government have not done it. They have not prevented any hon. gentleman from speaking. They have had the previous question moved to shut out amendments. They have been compelled to use rule 17 in order to get the previous question moved. I appeal even to the ingenuity of the hon. member for St. John to say whether or not in the history of this Parliament he could imagine a case where