

or the discussion of which may call forth observations which might be of injurious consequences. Then the previous question is proposed, and the discussion of the main question is suspended, and the debate confined to the previous question. The use of it has been abusively extended to other cases; but in these it is an embarrassing procedure, and the intention would be answered fully as well by more simple parliamentary forms, and therefore it should not be used, but restricted within as narrow limits as possible.

Neither Mr. Todd, nor any other historian, has ever been known to find a case wherein the previous question has been proposed to prevent the discussion of rules of procedure. Let me put it for the last time to hon. members seated opposite; they still have a recourse. The hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, who is the personification of everything that is dignified, has still a right. He may stand up in his place and beg leave to withdraw his motion. He must have seen, since the discussion has taken place, that the phraseology of the amended rules is all wrong. He must know that, as long as his motion stands before the House, the phraseology cannot be changed. Why does he not act in his own dignified manner, stand up and recognize that he has made a mistake, that it has been unknown ever to move the previous question on amended rules and withdraw his motion. Then, discussion may be useful. Until he does that I feel that we are perfectly helpless. A certain hon. member on the other side of the House, speaking to this question, said that the hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries proposed the previous question just to prevent the leader of the Opposition from speaking for a minute and a half. Did it appeal to you, Sir, that during that minute and a half, the leader of the Opposition might have said things that would not have been to the advantage of the Government? Is that what they feared? What could he say in a minute and a half that would have been so detrimental to the interests of the Government? Was it not a childish action on the part of the men who are charged with the administration of affairs of this country. Was it acting in a manly way? Is that what the country expects of the Government? What is the position of the leader of the Opposition in this Parliament? What is the position of the Opposition? Have we no rights? Have we no privileges? Are we not to be left to the exercise of our rights and our privileges? Have the people sent us here for no purpose, but simply to sit and listen to what may be enacted by the Government? My hon. friend from Rouville (Mr. Lemieux) suggests to pay for the padlocks. Well, there is a great deal of sense in saying that. What can happen? My hon. friend the Postmaster General (Mr. Pelletier) orders 350,000 padlocks, makes a contract, says they are standard padlocks, that they cost more than ordinary padlocks, that

Mr. DEVLIN.

Parliament may be burnt, that we may all die, that the Postmaster General may disappear from the country and that in order that there may be no mistake about it and that the business of the country may go on he wants to order enough padlocks to do for forty years to come. Now they introduce a rule which may prevent us from discussing that. I ask you, Sir, I ask the Government, is that a manly attitude for the Government to take? Why introduce this closure at the present time? Why prevent our discussion?

An hon. MEMBER: Why obstruct the Bill?

Mr. DEVLIN: What does the hon. gentleman say? I would like to hear his wise remark. Has some hon. gentleman opposite been getting leave to say a word? He is in exactly the same position as we are; he may talk till Doomsday but he cannot amend a single, solitary rule introduced by his Government. He must swallow it and he must swallow it without protest. But, if we are obliged to swallow this procedure, we will swallow it at least after having made a protest, after saying that we believe that never was such an iniquitous measure presented to this Parliament or to any parliament by any government. Having said that, we have said all that we are able to say upon the subject. There are several amendments that I might like to offer myself to the rules and I might wish to speak to these amendments. I ask the Government, will they withdraw their motion and allow me to propose some amendments? Not one. I resume my seat protesting as energetically as I am able, as a member of this House representing thousands of electors, against the attitude of the Government and I say that one of the darkest pages in the history of this Parliament was the day when the right hon. the Prime Minister introduced the closure and the other will be the day when the majority sitting behind the right hon. gentleman shall enact it into law.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, in rising to address the House upon this resolution, it is my intention to do so in the briefest manner possible. It is not my intention at all to discuss the scope and effect of the proposed amendment to the rules of the House of Commons, as contained in this resolution, but rather to discuss the propriety and necessity of any amendment to the rules. At the outset, I feel that I must concur in the protests which have been registered by my fellow-members on this side of the House against the method of procedure adopted on Wednesday of last week when the resolution which we are now discussing was moved by the Prime Minister. This House and the country generally will long regret that the distinguished leader of the Opposition, long a prominent and conspicuous figure