

and a motion is made that the clause we are discussing should pass. An hon. member moves that the clause be amended and that becomes the subject of debate similarly as an amendment becomes the subject of debate in the House. The motion that the clause pass, the amendment, the sub-amendment if there is one, all become consolidated together and become a subject of debate. The motion is debatable, the amendment is debatable, the sub-amendment is debatable, all are debatable. So much for the objection that no amendment would be allowed.

Let me come to another point. The hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) seemed very determined in his motions this afternoon. He almost took a fit as he thought over these rules and he said: You could stop debate altogether and you could put through a Bill to burn the House of Commons, to disband the army and scatter the navy, and to destroy the Transcontinental railway, all in three days. Of course he told us that was an extreme case. First let us see whether under these rules debate could be altogether shut out. The first clause says there shall be debate on a long list of subjects, and I submit that this includes every subject of substantial debate that the wit of man could imagine. The rule says these are subjects of debate and consequently they may be debated unless there is something absolutely inconsistent with that in another part of the rule, and which overrides it. But is there? The next clause of the rule says that any minister may rise in his place and give notice that at a certain time in the future, the next day perhaps, he will move that the debate be not further adjourned, or that the clauses which have been postponed be not further postponed. I cannot see how that is inconsistent with the provision that there shall be a debate. It says the minister may move, but he cannot move unless the provisions of the first clause have been lived up to and under that clause there must first of all be a debate. There must be a debate before the minister is empowered to rise in his place and move that a debate be adjourned. I would recommend the hon. member for South Wellington, if he has no better opinion of the meaning of the word 'debate' to go to a dictionary; a debate necessarily implies a speech on one side and a speech on the other side desired, at the very least. I submit that within the fair meaning of the word 'debate' the Government of the country would be bound, and will see to it, that there has been such debate as to reasonable men will appear sufficient for the subject in hand. There certainly must be debate and there can be debate at all stages of a Bill. There can be debate on the introduction

of the Bill, there can be debate on the second reading, there can be debate in committee, there can be debate on the third reading, to say nothing of the debates that may take place in the Select Standing Committees of this House. There is plenty of room for debate, and after the Government of the country have considered that the debate having proceeded to a reasonable length and obstruction having reared its head, there must be a motion, and even after that the Opposition have a subsequent day in which they may discuss that Bill and its clauses. Surely there can be nothing unfair about that.

Hon. gentlemen opposite tell us that the rules now proposed are worse than the British rules, but in the British House there does not need to be a word of debate on one side or the other before the motion is put. Before there is one word of debate in the British House a motion may be made that the question be put; nay, as soon as the question is put from the Chair, the motion may be made and that motion may be made not by a minister but by any private member. Let me read the English rule for fear hon. gentlemen will doubt my word; it is rule 133 and it reads:

After a question has been proposed, a member rising in his place may claim to move. 'That the question be now put,' and unless it appears to the Chair that the motion is an abuse of the rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the question. 'That the question be put,' must be put forthwith.

Mr. PUGSLEY: And Mr. Speaker can refuse to put it?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, and in one breath the hon. member (Mr. Pugsley) blames us for not importing into this House that discretion of the Speaker, and in the next breath the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) and the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) say you cannot import it here because the Speaker is elected by a majority in this House and it would not suit us. What do hon. gentlemen opposite mean anyway? Here is complaint from the hon. member for St. John that we have not left the discretion with the Speaker, and have placed the responsibility on the Government.

Mr. PUGSLEY: In England there is, by reason of the method of selection to the office of Speaker and the permanency of his tenure, that safeguard, and you do not impose any such safeguard by this resolution.

Mr. MEIGHEN: And the hon. member for South Wellington says you cannot impose that safeguard here, and if you did it would be worthless.