

call for a passing remark from hon. gentlemen on this side. In his first speech he tried to defend the action of the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries in moving the previous question and thus debarring the right hon. the leader of the Opposition from bringing in any amendment to this resolution. One of his utterances at that time was that they were justified in moving the previous question because he had heard that there were ninety-six amendments which were to be moved by hon. gentlemen on this side of the House to the resolution. I have only to say that the sense of hearing of my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie must be very highly developed because we on this side of the House, who are certainly in as close touch with the leader of the Opposition as that hon. member, never heard of any ninety-six amendments; but we did hear of one amendment, which was a constitutional amendment, and one only, and I say that in that remark the hon. member for Portage la Prairie was drawing upon his imagination rather than upon his fund of knowledge. Another utterance of the hon. member's appears at page 7699 of 'Hansard' of this year, where he is reported as follows:

I say that rule 17, which this Government availed itself of in order to permit the previous question to be moved, was placed in the rule book by the right hon. the leader of the Opposition.

That statement remains upon 'Hansard' and I would advise the hon. member, if he wishes to be as just and as fair as I, for one, believe him to be, to correct that impression which has been sent broadcast throughout the country.

Mr. MEIGHEN: If the hon. gentleman will read the statement correctly he will see that it needs no correction. I stated that it was placed in its present form in the book by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. CARROLL: That is true, but it follows the words I have taken from 'Hansard.' The words I have quoted stand there to-day, and every Conservative newspaper in this country the next day published them with huge headlines. I say again, Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. member for Portage la Prairie is as fair and as just as I believe him to be, and as he would lead this House to believe, he should expunge that particular paragraph from the records of 'Hansard.' It is not in keeping with the facts. Rule 17 has been one of the rules of this House almost since Confederation. There was an amendment to it, to be sure, that it was not debatable, but in substance the rule is the same to-day as it was previous to the time when the right hon. gentleman who now leads the Opposition led the Government of this country. Yesterday the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) in

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a clear-cut declaration, so clear-cut and explicit, that a school boy could understand it, showed that a Bill might be introduced in this House and put through its various stages without a member of the Opposition being able to discuss or criticise it, or to move an amendment to that Bill, with the exception of the first motion that leave be given by the House to introduce the Bill. How did my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie meet that? He gave his definition of the word 'debate.' He said there must be some debate upon such a question. I am not going to reiterate the speech of my hon. friend from South Wellington; I think it was so clear-cut that any person could understand it, and I think that when the hon. member for Portage la Prairie undertook to get over that insurmountable wall he sprawled on his back. The only way in which he tried to get over it was to say that there must be some debate. So, say I, Mr. Speaker, but debate does not necessarily mean a controversy between contending parties in this House. A debate does not necessarily mean a discussion involving speeches from members on the Government benches and from members of the Opposition. An hon. member may get up on the other side of the House and discuss a question pro and con, and that would be as much a debate as if hon. members on both sides of the House were to take part in it. So I say that that proposition of the hon. member for South Wellington stands as an insurmountable wall, because it is a true, logical and a well reasoned argument. If I remember rightly, I think that the hon. member for Portage la Prairie told us to go to the dictionary to find out what was the meaning of the word 'debate.' I can debate a question with myself without giving utterance to one audible syllable.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is the way the Government did.

Mr. CARROLL: Yes, that is the way the Government did. If I have not fully convinced the hon. member for Portage la Prairie that my contention is right, I will say that there is under the rules of this House a provision, as there will be when this resolution passes, an opportunity for two members to discuss a subject. I will go so far. One hon. member on the other side and one on this side of the House might discuss it, and if an hon. minister rising in his place wished to impose the closure, he could do so, and any Bill introduced in this House, important or unimportant, might be passed, on a strict reading of these rules, after two speeches only, and both of these speeches might be on the other side of the House. If my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie does not