

in error on that occasion in the following respects: In the first place in taking the Chair in the absence of a report from the committee; in the second place in giving any direction to the Chairman, Your Honour being a member of that committee was subject to the direction of the Chairman and could therefore give no direction to the Chair; in the third place in pronouncing the debate in committee closed, because I have neither seen nor heard any authority cited giving Your Honour that power; in the fourth place in naming an hon. member of the House, who could not be out of order under such circumstances unless Your Honour were in the Chair. I do not know what view my hon. friend from Red Deer (Mr. Clark) takes of the situation. It might be well, however, to have the records of the House corrected, if they are incorrect through any mistake in procedure. So satisfied am I in my own mind that rule 14 applies in every particular to the situation, which was evident to everybody who was in the House on the 15th of March last, that I am confident that hon. members after calmly reading that rule will conclude that there is no power in this Chamber, under our rules or under any parliamentary usage or custom to which we are bound to give obedience, which would entitle Your Honour to take the Chair as you did on that occasion. I agree entirely with this proposition, that the English rules to a very large extent are the outcome of recognized usage. Occasionally they are not so. In 1882, the closure was a new rule which did not owe its existence to any recognized custom or usage; it was a rule *de novo*. The majority of English rules have arisen from well recognized customs or usage which have been codified. Although we are not bound by the English rule itself, if passed after the year 1867, we are bound by the ancient usage or custom, provided it has not been changed by any of our rules, pursuant to rule 1, which reads as follows:

In all cases not provided for hereinafter or by sessional or other orders, the rules, usages and forms of proceeding of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in force on the first day of July, 1867, shall be followed.

Many of them which were in force then are in force now. These we are bound to obey unless we have ourselves provided some different form of procedure. But, taking the rules and authorities from beginning to end so far as I have been able to judge, I cannot come to any other conclusion—and I come to it with the greatest deference to Your Honour—that Your Honour was in error in taking the action you took on the day in question, and that the House should now seek to devise some procedure

suitable for such an occasion, if the procedure is not already well enough defined by rule 14. Such an incident may never happen again in this Chamber—I hope it may not—but as long as minorities in this Chamber have to depend upon the good offices and good-will of chairman, the rule becomes a most important one; and minorities will have to see to it that their rights and privileges are protected under that rule; and if they are not protected under that rule, procedure will have to be taken by this House which will protect them.

Hon. W. T. WHITE (Minister of Finance): My hon. friend (Mr. Guthrie) has referred to the rights of minorities. I do not see that this is a question that affects the rights of minorities solely; this is a question that relates to the procedure of this House upon occasions of grave disorder. It does not follow by any means that minorities are always to be responsible for such disorders, and I do not conceive that my hon. friend intends to convey that impression. It seems to me that the question is as to whether your action, Mr. Speaker, was justifiable on the 15th of March in resuming the Chair under the circumstances existing at that particular time. Because, notwithstanding that this is stated to be an academic or theoretical discussion, or, as my hon. friend from South Wellington has said, a discussion in order that the method of procedure may be decided under similar circumstances, at the same time, both the hon. member for Westmorland who has brought the matter to the attention of the House, and other speakers also have made reference to the occurrence of the 15th of March, and therefore I am justified in dealing with the circumstances that existed upon that occasion in addressing myself to this subject. The hon. member for South Wellington has said that you were in error on that occasion. Differing from him, I affirm that your action was entirely justified by the constitutional precedents and usages, that you acted, Sir, with dignity and firmness upon that occasion, and that you are entitled essentially to the thanks of this House for that action. Speaking generally, and speaking of course, only for myself, I deprecate the attempt to decide in advance a question of this kind. We are unable as a House to foresee what circumstances will arise which the Speaker of this House may have to deal with. Occasions have arisen in the British House of Commons such as have not arisen before, and the Speaker who is charged with the duty of preserving the dignity of the House and the regularity of debate had to act in such a manner as he deemed best to put an end to disorder. Therefore, I think it is unwise to deal with this question from an academic or theoretical standpoint, to