

House of Commons had power by usage and custom to revise the rules without reference to a committee in 1877, 1880 and 1881, surely they must have had the same power in 1867. But this House has revised its rules without reference to a committee. In 1868, on motion of Mr. Duncan and Sir George Etienne Cartier, rule 22 of this House, a permanent rule, was permanently amended without reference to a committee. That is to be found at page 144 of the Journals of that year. In 'Hansard' of 1877, at pages 3 and 4, it will be found that Sir John A. Macdonald clearly affirmed the principle that the House could at any time by motion change its rules upon due notice. That was established by the practice of this House and by the practice both prior to 1867 and since then, we have ample power to alter the rules if we so desire without reference to a committee. I do not pretend to argue that the other method, that of reference to a committee for a report, would not also be quite within our power and both methods are certainly available under some circumstances—one method would be preferred and under other circumstances the other; but when an Opposition sits in front of a government, under the authority of its leader and the additional authority to-night of his lieutenant, avowedly in an obstructionist position, in a position to prevent the vote on the Naval Bill as well as on the closure, it is the duty of the Government to see to it that the rules followed will prevent, so far as we can prevent, the success of obstruction. Hon. gentlemen opposite have conjured up new objections in their minds to-night. This first one is that violence is being done to the rights of the minority because they are not permitted to debate adjournments and the leader of the Opposition to-night went so far as to say that if any motions by their nature required discussion and debate, motions to adjourn did. The hon. member for Carleton says that inasmuch as you are preventing us from discussing motions to adjourn, such as we are now debating, you are making our rules worse than the English rules. That is his position. Well, Mr. Speaker, in the name of common sense, what serious injury can be done to Parliament even under the most strained circumstances, even in the most extreme cases, by the refusal ordinarily to discuss adjournment? Motions to adjourn are in the main purely formal motions. There may be cases where perhaps they serve another purpose, but those cases are amply provided for and the opportunity for discussion is amply preserved by the first rule which we now propose to insert, cases where it is desired to discuss matters of urgent public consequence under a motion to adjourn. But what violence can be done to the rights of the minority, how do we injure the procedure of this House, by saying you shall not be

allowed in open debate to move adjournment for the purpose merely of throwing the House into committee so that a man can talk as often as he likes on any subject? Surely once is sufficient. But says the hon. member for Carleton, N.B., they have in England the right as we have had the right to move an adjournment for the purpose of giving hon. gentlemen a chance to speak twice. Surely that is not right. I showed him that two weeks ago, but I think he was out of the House. In England they have no right to move adjournments for the purpose of discussing any thing at all except the reasons why they should adjourn. That is abundantly clear from the British rules. They have the right, as we have it, to move adjournments for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of public urgency. If a member of the British House moves the adjournment of the House at any time, he can support that motion ordinarily by reasons why the House should adjourn, but he cannot revert to the main motion, as we are doing, and discuss the main motion. That right has been taken away from him in England for many years, and no one has complained as to the result. Not only have they no right to discuss anything except reasons for adjournment on a motion to adjourn, but they can be forbidden to discuss that before a gentleman rises at all because immediately the motion is put by Mr. Speaker, to the House, any hon. member may rise and demand that the closure be applied. In Great Britain, no hon. member can discuss even the reasons why the House should adjourn except by the will of the majority, let alone discuss ad infinitum the main motion, such as we are doing now. But my hon. friend from Carleton, N.B. says, you are taking from us the right to move motions to adjourn for the purpose of discussing matters of urgent public importance, 'inasmuch as you have put it in the power of the Speaker to decide whether or not it is a matter of urgent public importance, and therefore within his power to refuse the right to discuss such a matter. In the first place, it was the hon. gentlemen opposite themselves who put that within your power, Mr. Speaker. It was hon. gentlemen opposite themselves who appointed the committee which in 1906, I think, revised the rules and inserted clause 39, which places it within your discretion, Mr. Speaker, to measure the importance of the subject which an hon. member desires to discuss. So if they have any complaint, it is against themselves. But surely we are not getting into the invasion of individual rights more than they are in England. Is the hon. member for Carleton aware that the rule in England is word for word the