

Mr. PUGSLEY: I am discussing it, Mr. Chairman. I am assuming now that this is a binding rule. By this resolution the previous question is always debatable. The resolution says:

Every motion heretofore debatable made upon routine proceedings except adjournment motions, and every motion standing on the order of the proceedings for the day, or for concurrence in a report of a standing or a special committee, or for the previous question, shall be debatable.

The majority of the House has chosen by its resolution to declare that whenever the previous question is moved that question shall be debatable. That makes all motions in regard to which the previous question is moved debatable, whether the Speaker is in the Chair or whether the Deputy Speaker is in the Chair in Committee of the Whole. All I ask you to do is to interpret faithfully the resolution which a majority of this House has forced upon the minority. We ask you to rule that this motion, that the question be now put, being the motion of the previous question, is debatable and I claim the privilege of debating it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman from St. John appears to think he has found a mare's nest. I have observed throughout the day many hon. gentlemen sitting with the rule book in their hands and this is apparently the mouse that has come from the mountain. The previous question has, from time immemorial, been moved in the House only and not in committee. The hon. gentleman says that does not apply to motions in Canada because we have a rule which says that the rules of debate applicable in the House shall be applicable in committee, with two exceptions.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Will my hon. friend pardon me?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Sit down.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I rise to correct my hon. friend. The rule does not say that the rules of debate shall be applicable, it says that the rules of the House shall be observed in the Committee of the Whole House as far as they may be applicable.

Mr. MEIGHEN: And Sir John Bourinot has written since that rule was placed in the rule book. Bourinot is the authority in this House and he says that the previous question cannot be moved in committee; and with all deference to the hon. member for St. John, I presume that he will say that we should accept Bourinot rather than himself when Bourinot writes as to the interpretation of the rule. Consequently, the previous question, not being movable in committee, cannot be moved now. Clause

Mr. BORDEN.

3 of the Bill has been debated, the debate may not have been pertinent, but we are not responsible for that. Hon. gentlemen have risen on both sides and whatever definition of debate may be accepted the motion now is movable, the motion is that the discussion of the clause be postponed and that motion is not debatable.

Mr. PUGSLEY: It seems to me passing strange that my hon. friend should take a different view to-night from the view which he has taken in the past and in regard to which he gave a certain assurance to this House, speaking on behalf of the Government. My hon. friend did not speak then as a private member, because when the Prime Minister was asked as to the interpreting of the rules he said that the House would receive the interpretation very shortly, referring, no doubt, to the interpretation which would be given by the hon. member for Portage la Prairie. That interpretation, made in the presence of the Prime Minister and of the Speaker, whose duty is to have regard to the framing of the rules of the House, ought, I think, to be binding, at all events upon the hon. member for Portage la Prairie. My hon. friend said that this motion has been debated. It has not been. The motion has been made by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister, there has been no debate upon that motion.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I referred to the debate on clause 3 of the Bill.

Mr. PUGSLEY: But the motion now before the committee is that the further consideration of this clause be postponed.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I say that is not debatable.

Mr. PUGSLEY: That is not— —

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is not debatable.

Mr. PUGSLEY: To that I moved that the question be now put, that is I moved the previous question and I say that under this resolution that motion then becomes debatable. What is my hon. friend's answer to that? I quite admit that a majority of this House can vote me down and declare something to be the rules which are not the rules. I quite recognize that the same force which the majority had to carry through this resolution can vote down the motion which I am making and declare that they will not recognize the authority I am presenting. All I do is appeal to you, it is all I can do, to interpret this resolution according to its fair and plain meaning. In the first place, my hon. friend says that the previous question cannot be moved in committee. And why? Because Sir John Bourinot has written so. I have great respect for Dr. Flint, but if Dr. Flint were to write to-morrow that al-