

That appears to be perfectly plain, and I can only offer an apology to the House for not having looked into the matter before it was brought up yesterday. I had not the rules at my finger ends and there was no copy of them before me. I think, in the interest of the House, it is better to follow the rules as they stand. They only came into force in the latter part of the Session of 1888. Last year we had no less than five divorce cases, in all of which the mode of procedure was adopted which suggests itself to any person who sees that rule—that is to say, upon the presentation of a petition the petition and all the papers should be referred to the Divorce Committee to be reported upon. The petition is not read here at all; it stands as referred, without any order whatever, but in all those cases—the Lowry, the Middleton, the Rosamond, the Bagwell and the Wand—it will be found by reference to our Journals, which I have taken the trouble to look into, that the petition was presented and no order was made—the petition was never read but it stood, in the language of that rule, as referred to the Committee on Divorce. At page 33 the report of that committee to the House appears. When the report of the committee was presented the motion was made for its adoption, and the House in all these cases decided to adopt the report. I simply mention this to show that the matter is still under the control of the House. In all these cases, except the Rosamond case, which was withdrawn, the report was adopted, the proceedings went on and the Bills were passed through their final stages. There are these five precedents to govern us, and I think it is not too strong language to use to say that it is highly inconvenient to establish a contradictory procedure now, unless it is required by the rules. As the rules appear to me to be quite clear, I think I am simply discharging my duty in calling attention to the matter, in order that we may avoid adopting a course this year which we may depart from next Session. I think, therefore, I am entitled to ask that the House will be prepared to express an opinion on the matter, and I hope that that opinion will be to keep us in the line we have been travelling upon—to keep us not only to the letter but to the spirit of that rule, the object of which was, I repeat, to relegate to the Divorce Committee the task of

examining the evidence in support of the petition, instead of obtaining it in the inconvenient manner in which it was formerly brought before the House, and allow the committee to report to the House, and the House to take such action as may be deemed advisable upon the report.

HON. MR. MILLER—I think I shall be able to show to the House that the hon. member from Amherst is quite wrong, both in his own interpretation of the rule and in the citation he has made in support of his view. I have to complain, in the first place, that in a matter of this kind he has not thought proper to give me some intimation of his intention to bring the subject before the House to-day. The question is one which requires reference to authorities, and one which I cannot well discuss without preparation. Still, I will answer my hon. friend on the spur of the moment. It is amusing that in bringing this matter before the Senate my hon. friend has been guilty of violating two of our rules. In the first place, he referred to a previous debate; and, in the second place, he has not given such notice as our rules require. I would readily have dispensed with a formal notice if he had not failed to call my attention to the course he intended to take before making the statement which we have heard to-day. The position which I took yesterday was this: I observed that some of the petitions which had been presented the day before were being read. It had been the practice of the Senate, following the practice of the House of Lords, that at least one sitting day should intervene between the presenting and the reading of a petition. I observed among the petitions which were being read that there were some for divorce Bills, and I called the attention of the House to the subject, and, I think, kept the proceedings regular by doing so. My hon. friend has cited Rule "1," and, perhaps, without sufficient research and examination of the question, he might be led to suppose that the intention of that rule was that the petition should be referred to the Committee on Divorce on its presentation. I contend that the word "presented" here is intended to comprise the general proceeding which takes place in regard to petitions presented to the Senate before they are