

question, until it is decided, shall preclude all amendments to the main question"—(ironical Opposition cheers)—"and shall be in the following word:—'That this question be now put.' If the previous question be resolved in the affirmative, the original question is put forthwith, without amendment or debate." (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. CARTIER—Mr. SPEAKER, I second the motion. (Derisive Opposition cheers.)

THE SPEAKER—The motion is that this question be now put.

HON. MR. HOLTÓN—I shall not on this occasion, sir, make any remarks as to the mode of proceeding adopted by the Honorable Attorney General West, further than this, that a friend, an honorable member of this House, intimated to me yesterday that this course was likely to be pursued by the Government in order to crowd this measure through the House. I scouted the idea. I thought it was impossible that a government, numbering in its ranks public men who have played a prominent part in the parliamentary history of this country for some years, could resort to so base a trick—(cheers and counter cheers)—after having introduced this measure in the manner they have done—after having introduced it in a most unparliamentary and unconstitutional manner—and seeing that amendments would be made to several of the propositions contained in the resolutions adopted by the Conference which assembled in Quebec, they shut off all opportunity to amend the measure by moving the previous question. (Hear, hear.) Why was it not stated by the Honorable Attorney General West himself that we would be able to get at the sense of the House upon every one of the propositions, by moving amendments? (Hear, hear.) In full confidence that that pledge would be kept, when my honorable friend who sits near me told me he had reason to believe that this very course was in contemplation, I repeat I scouted the idea. (Hear, hear.) I shall not offer any further observations on this point at the present moment, beyond remarking that if the object be to curtail debate, as the honorable gentleman says it is—if his real motive be in truth to arrive at an early vote upon this question—his own statement shows how utterly futile his motion is to accomplish that end. It was not at all necessary that the honorable gentleman should have told us that we may discuss the previous question. We are now, by a compact which I presume will not be

violated—although I do not know what attempt will be made next—we are practically in Committee of the Whole, with liberty to speak as often as we please on this question. Therefore, the object stated by the honorable gentleman cannot be attained, but another object can be and will be attained—they will take their followers, whom they have already led on to do things of which they will bitterly repent when they come face to face with their constituents, and drag them still further through the mire—(cheers and counter cheers)—by depriving them of the opportunity of putting on record their views, even in the inconvenient form of amendments, upon the various propositions which are proposed to be embodied in this Address to the Crown. (Hear, hear.) Sir, the honorable gentleman says that the information received by telegraph in reference to the defences renders it necessary that an early decision should be come to in the matter of Federation. But what has been the course of the honorable gentlemen opposite, throughout this debate, when the subject of the defences has been referred to? When we have said—"Put us in possession of the necessary information to consider the subject of the defences, which must be discussed in connection with the scheme of Confederation," what has been the reply? Why, that there was no natural or necessary connection between the two subjects. (Hear, hear.) Thus, when the honorable gentlemen were asked to bring down the information in regard to the defences, they have maintained that there is no connection between the two questions; but when they have a purpose to serve by so doing, they reverse their position and say, "By all means rush this thing through with all possible speed, in order that the country may be placed in a position of defence." I think, sir, we are entitled at this stage of the debate, and under these circumstances, to demand that all the information in possession of the Government in regard to the defences, should be laid before the House. I believe there is no better recognized parliamentary rule than this, that when a Minister of the Crown rises in his place in Parliament and refers to despatches on matters of public importance, these despatches must be laid before the House. It is founded on the same rule which prevails in our courts, which requires that any paper referred to in evidence or argument, in order to be of use, must be in the possession of the court. I should like to ask the Hon. Attorney General West the question—and I pause for