

I never understood that they had stated that amendments could not be proposed. It was to be treated not as a party question, but the fullest latitude was to be allowed, as if in committee of the whole; but now the Government shuts down upon friends as well as opponents. I think their course most illogical, and I would like to have the Hon. Provincial Secretary explain it.

HON. MR. McDOUGALL—I apprehend there are few honorable gentlemen in the House whose impressions on the subject are similar to those of the honorable gentleman. (Hear, hear.) It was fully understood by the House that the scheme was brought before Parliament as the result of the Conference of all the colonial governments, and as a Government measure. I think, sir, it was further distinctly stated that being in the nature of a treaty, it was absurd to suppose that it would be competent for any of the legislatures to amend the scheme, because the moment the door is thrown open to amendments in one legislature, the same privilege would be claimed by each of the others. What kind of a scheme would it be after each legislature had tinkered it to suit its own views, and what length of time does the honorable gentleman think it would take to arrive at a common agreement if that course were pursued? In the very nature of things, whether this is the best or the worst scheme that could have been devised, we cannot get around the fact that it is of the nature of a treaty, and, therefore, must be voted upon by a simple yea and nay. (Hear, hear.) It is in that view that the Government have submitted it to this House, and it is upon that view that the verdict of this House must be pronounced. As I have already stated, the determination to which the Government has come is to press the main motion, pure and simple, upon the attention of the House, and to use every legitimate parliamentary means to get a decision, and by that decision we are prepared to stand or fall. I hope there will be no misunderstanding on the part of honorable members. It is not the intention of the Government, in any manner, to deprive honorable gentlemen of the opportunity—the fullest opportunity—of expressing their views on this scheme. But what we do intend to prevent, if we can, is the attempt to divert the attention of the House from the resolutions of the Conference to propositions like that of the honorable member for North Ontario, who desires to submit another and a totally different scheme, which he knows well must be rejected by every member of the proposed Con-

federation. This proposition must be discussed, if discussed at all, in some other way than as an amendment to, or substitute for, the scheme of the Quebec Conference.

HON. J. S. MACDONALD—I think, sir, that the large majority of the members of this House will agree with me that the proposition made by the leader of the Government to prevent amendments being submitted by moving “the previous question,” has taken us all by surprise. I think this House should hold this step to be a gross breach of the understanding which was entered into at the time it was agreed that the House should be considered as in committee of the whole, with you, sir, in the chair. For it was then fully understood that though no amendment would be allowed to be adopted, if the Government could prevent it, yet there would be no objection to their being moved in the ordinary way. It was therefore understood that this House was, for all practical purposes, in Committee of the Whole, and as “the previous question” could not be moved in Committee of the Whole, it was consequently out of order to move it now. I would ask hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches, if they did not solemnly enter into a compact of that nature with this House? If they committed an error in deciding to retain the SPEAKER in the chair on the conditions referred to, they are now taking advantage of their own wrong. Sir, the Opposition proper have abstained from placing on the paper any notice of amendments. They found that several amendments which embraced their views were to be moved by gentlemen who were friendly to the Administration. Those gentlemen could not suppose for a moment that their motions were to be choked off, whatever might be the intention of the Government in relation to similar amendments if proposed from this side of the House. But “the previous question,” thus moved, applies ruthlessly to friends and foes. To quote the language of the honorable member for Carleton:—“It is now quite clear that they (the Government) are going to put the same gag on their friends that they devised for their opponents.” (Hear, hear.) Let us enquire who are those who compose the Administration, and who, after violating their solemn agreement, now venture to trample upon the rights and privileges of the representatives of the people in this House? I need only remark that nine members of this Government, and who were in the Administration before the Coal-