

The House of Representatives does not vote on the withdrawal of motions, but provides by clause 2 of rule XVI and clause 5 of rule XXIII the conditions under which a Member may of his own right withdraw a motion.

SEC. XXXIV.—THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.

When any question is before the House, any Member may move a previous question, “Whether that question (called the main question) shall now be put?” If it pass in the affirmative, then the main question is to be put immediately, and no man may speak anything further to it, either to add or alter. *Memor. in Hakew., 28; 4 Grey, 27.*

The previous question being moved and seconded, the question from the Chair shall be, “Shall the main question be now put?” and if the nays prevail, the main question shall not then be put.

In the modern practice of the House of Representatives the previous question is put as follows: “The gentleman from —— demands the previous question. As many as are in favor of ordering the previous question will say aye; as many as are opposed will say no” (V, 5443).

This kind of question is understood by Mr. Hatsell to have been introduced in 1604. *2 Hats., 80.* Sir Henry Vane introduced it. *2 Grey, 113, 114; 3 Grey, 384.* When the question was put in this form, “Shall the main question be put?” a determination in the negative suppressed the main question during the session; but since the words “now put” are used, they exclude it for the present only; formerly, indeed, only till the present debate was over, *4 Grey, 43,* but now for that day and no longer. *2 Grey, 113, 114.*

Before the question “Whether the main question shall now be put?” any person might formerly have spoken to the main question, because otherwise he would be precluded from speaking to it at all. *Mem. in Hakew., 28.*

The proper occasion for the previous question is when a subject is brought forward of a delicate nature as to high personages, &c., or the discussion of which may call forth observations which might be of injurious consequences. Then the previous question is proposed, and in the modern usage the discussion of the main question is suspended and the debate confined to the previous question. The use of it has been extended abusively to other cases, but in these it has been an embarrassing procedure. Its uses would be as well answered by other more simple parliamentary forms, and therefore it should not be favored, but restricted within as narrow limits as possible.

As explained in connection with rule XVII, the House of Representatives has changed entirely the old use of the previous question (V, 5445).

SEC. XXXV.—AMENDMENTS.

§ 465. Right of the Member who has spoken to the main question to speak to an amendment.

On an amendment being moved, a Member who had spoken to the main question may speak again to the amendment. *Scob., 23.*

This parliamentary rule applies in the House of Representatives, where the hour rule of debate (clause 2 of rule XIV) has been in force for many years. A member who has spoken an hour to the main question, may speak another hour to an amendment (V, 4994; VIII, 2449).