

SWEDEN AND NORWAY.

Mr. Erskine reports to Lord Granville, as to Sweden, "There is in this country hardly any guarantee against malevolent waste of the public time in the debates of the Diet. Every member of either Chamber possesses the privilege of speaking as often as and at whatever length he chooses on any question under debate; whilst the majority has no right, as in France and elsewhere, to demand the *clôture*. In fact, the only check which exists against abuse is the moral pressure of an impatient Chamber, and the wholesome influence of unrestricted publicity. No complaint has, however, yet arisen as to any abuse of this excessive liberty of speech, as has been the case in Norway and Denmark, the Swedish character being less addicted to garrulity than those of some other countries."

In the Norwegian Storting, a member is entitled to speak as often as he pleases, and no question can be put to the vote as long as any representative desires to be heard on it. Should debate be unreasonably prolonged, the President may suggest to the House the expediency of being brief and avoiding repetition, or of closing the discussion. He has not, however, the right to interrupt any member.

SWITZERLAND.

Mr. Carew's report to the Foreign Office is, "The *clôture* exists, and is frequently put into practice, in the Conseil National, especially in the course of the more important debates. The text of Article 49 (modified)—which relates to the *clôture*—of the Règlement for the Conseil National, is as follows: 'L'Assemblée peut décider la clôture des débats si les deux tiers des membres présents la réclament; toutefois la clôture ne pourra être prononcée tant qu'un membre de l'Assemblée, qui n'a pas encore pris la parole, désire formuler une proposition et la motiver.' After the *clôture* of a debate has been pronounced by the President of the Chamber, no one has the right to ask permission to speak. Although no mention is made of the existence and application of the *clôture* in the Conseil des Etats, in point of fact it does exist there, and on the same conditions as in the Conseil National, though it is much more rarely put into practice there than in the last-named Chamber. The working of the *clôture* in both Chambers is described as highly satisfactory."

UNITED STATES.

In the "Rules for conducting Business in the House of Representatives of the United States," the following stands as No. 17:—

"1. There shall be a motion for the previous question, which, being ordered by a majority of members present, if a quorum, shall have the effect to cut off all debate and bring the House to a direct vote upon the immediate question or questions on which it has been asked and ordered. The previous question may be asked and ordered upon a single motion, a series of motions allowable under the Rules, or an amendment or amendments, or may be made to embrace all authorized motions or amendments and include the Bill to its engrossment and third reading, and then, on renewal and second of said motion, to its passage or rejection. It shall be in order, pending the motion for or after the previous question shall have been ordered on its passage, for the Speaker to entertain and submit a motion to commit, with or without instructions, to a Standing or Select Committee; and a motion to lay upon the table shall be in order on the second and third reading of a Bill.—2. A call of the House shall not be in order after the previous question is ordered, unless it shall appear upon an actual count by the Speaker that a quorum is not present.—3. All incidental questions of order arising after a motion is made for the previous question, and pending such motion, shall be decided, whether on appeal or otherwise, without debate."

Mr. Evarts, writing to Sir E. Thornton, says that these rules "are substantially in use, so far as applicable, in all the local Legislative Assemblies of this country." Mr. Evarts adds, "It is understood that, in practice, the 'previous question' has generally been found to work well, by enabling the majority to resist the factious obstruction of legislation, without unduly interfering with rights of the minority."