

member for West Hastings, rose from his seat and drew from his pocket a resolution prepared in advance. This produced a storm of protest from the Liberals. As soon as quiet could be restored, Mr. Northrup proceeded to read aloud. The resolution was for the purpose of enabling the House to take a vote to prevent Sir Wilfrid Laurier, notwithstanding that the Speaker had accorded him the right, from speaking. Never before in the history of the Canadian Parliament has a resolution under the rule cited been presented. The proceedings as recorded in *Hansard* are as follows:—

"Mr. W. B. Northrup (Hastings East): I rise under rule 17, Mr. Speaker, which rule, if I may be allowed to read it to the House, is as follows: (*)

"When two or more members rise to speak, Mr. Speaker calls upon the member who first rose in his place but a motion may be made that any member who has risen 'be now heard' or 'do now speak', which motion shall be forthwith put without debate.

"Under that rule of the House, I beg to move, seconded by Mr. Blain, member for Peel:

"That the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, being the member for the city and county of St. John, be now heard.

"SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

"SIR WILFRID LAURIER: When you have got a majority in this House, that is what we have to expect from you—shame."

A moment later Sir Wilfrid rose to a point of order, stating that the motion as presented was not correct, that it should state that he as well as the Minister of Marine and Fisheries had risen. Mr. Borden at once intervened to prevent this fact being recorded saying "The motion is precisely in the form provided by rule 17." The Speaker following the wish of the Prime Minister refused to consider any amending of Mr. Northrup's motion, and the members

*A persistent effort has been made by the Conservative press to have it appear that Sir Wilfrid Laurier while Prime Minister was responsible for the introduction of Rule 17 which gives to any member of the House the right to demand that in the event of two members rising at the same time, a vote shall be taken to ascertain which of the two shall be heard. This allegation is wholly without foundation and an absolute misrepresentation of the facts. The rule has been one of the rules of the House ever since Confederation, but has never been made use of. The Speaker's ruling has always been regarded as sufficient. Moreover, it is impossible to conceive that it was ever contemplated by those who framed this rule that it would be used as a means of destroying the universally conceded custom of affording to the Leader of the Opposition the right of reply to the Leader of the Government in regard to any measure of public importance. Sir John Bourinot who is the leading authority on procedure in the Canadian Parliament says: "It is usual to allow priority to members of the Administration who wish to speak, and in all important debates it is customary for the Speaker to endeavour to give the preference alternately to the known supporters and opponents of a measure or question; and it is irregular to interfere with the Speaker's call in favour of any other member."

When in 1906, the rules of the House of Commons were revised, there was added to rule 17 the words, "which motion shall be forthwith put without debate". This is the only change for which Sir Wilfrid Laurier's government was responsible. It will be seen that this amendment relates to the method by which a motion shall be decided, but has nothing whatever to do with the motion itself. What the Liberals in Parliament objected to was not that the motion to give the floor to Mr. Hasen was put without debate, but that it was presented at all. In other words, that a rule which was introduced as a means of enabling the House to decide as to which of two members should be heard where the House objected to the Speaker's ruling, should have been made an instrument to destroy the accepted usage of Parliament of the Leader of the Opposition being accorded the right of following the Leader of the government.