

Speaker holds that ground, I suppose that the Premier and the leader of the Opposition will have to bow to the rule. But what I want to bring to the Speaker's mind is this. If this had been a motion to go into Supply on Estimates that we had not taken up last Friday, none of this present objection would have arisen. The motion of Friday last was to go into Supply to take up civil government for every department. If, therefore, the rule held, we would, in an omnibus way, have been able, by your leaving the Chair, to go into every department that the Government had Estimates in. That would, as has been said, take away a very valuable privilege from the Opposition. The other day, if my right hon. friend had objected, and if he had maintained his objection, we could not have gone into Supply at all except with respect to one single department. The language of the Prime Minister as to his intent, I think, is as plain as can be. I was sitting at his side at the time, and we spoke together about it, and my impression was exactly the same as his, that the rule, if applied absolutely, might be unfair to the Opposition, and might deprive them, and a great many members of the House, of having a discussion on the motion for the Speaker to leave the Chair rather than that the Speaker should simply leave the Chair. If the Speaker can see his way to allow the arrangement, which I think was really made between us, to go into operation by consent, it would be better to move the motion for going into Supply to-day and settle the difficulty, about which I am sure my hon. friends are anxious.

Mr. SPEAKER: Of course, it can be done with the consent and desire of the House. When the House has unanimously expressed its desire, I do not take it that the Chair has any right to interfere with that desire. But, in regard to the interpretation of the rule, it seems to me that there is a very significant and important difference in saying that the rule shall not apply now and saying that it shall not apply for the whole of the session. Usually, when we suspend the rule, we suspend it in regard to a certain motion, Bill, or action now, and it only applies to now. If I apprehended the explanation of the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster), the suspension which he understood the Prime Minister to make and the right hon. leader of the Opposition to accept would apply to the whole session.

[Mr. G. E. Foster.]

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: To-day my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce proposes to take up the Departments of Trade and Commerce and of Labour. If these items are not completed to-day you will leave the Chair, Mr. Speaker, next Friday as a matter of course, and they can be taken up again. All the departments have been gone into with the exception of that of the Department of the Secretary of State, and to-day, Mr. Speaker, you can leave the Chair without having a motion made. But, if the Government were to attempt to take up the Department of the Secretary of State, I would have the right to say: No, you cannot take up that department, because those Estimates have not been considered on any other day than to-day. The rule appears to be very clear:

The Estimates of each department shall be first taken upon a day other than Thursday or Friday.

If the Solicitor General were here, I think he would confirm my view upon this matter. But the estimates of a department, having been submitted on any other day, may be continued on Thursday or Friday without any motion. To-day we are going to consider the Estimates of the Departments of Labour and Trade and Commerce. Next Thursday, if we are called upon again to consider the estimates of these departments, you, Mr. Speaker, can leave the Chair without any motion; but if that is done the Government cannot proceed with anything except that which has already been commenced. The Minister of Trade and Commerce understood that, I understood it in the same way, and therefore we allowed all the departments to be gone into because it was done by consent. The Prime Minister said: I will not interfere with your right and we will not apply the rule with regard to Thursday and Friday, to-day. Therefore, we would still have the privilege of moving, should we have a motion to make. Otherwise, we would simply cut off our arms and we would have no opportunity, except one, of making a motion on going into Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that my right hon. friend will recall to his memory that I said on the occasion that it might pass to-day, but that, at the same time, you were laying up a lot of trouble for the future. That is what was in my mind at the time. This rule contemplated that every department would be considered for the first time on some day other than Thursday or Friday, so as to give