

This not sufficient, Mr. Borden added, "The rules that are put in force must of course, be exercised prudently and fairly. It would not be to the interest of any government to exercise them unfairly. . . . I can only say that I commend the rules to the consideration and approval of honourable gentlemen on both sides of the House in the full conviction that they have been drawn up in such a way, and with such provisos and safeguards, that honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House will be absolutely secured of their full rights of speech with regard to any public measure that may be presented for the consideration of this Parliament. . . . All that we desire—and I speak in the most absolute sincerity to honourable gentlemen opposite—is to bring about such conditions as will permit to each and every one of them all reasonable freedom of debate, and at the same time permit the government and the majority in this House to go on in a reasonable way with the public business of the country.

The echo of these words was still to be heard in the chamber of the House of Commons when Sir Wilfrid Laurier, rising as Leader of the Opposition to speak in reply to Mr. Borden, was denied the constitutional right, the time honoured and most universally conceded privilege of answering the Prime Minister and of conveying to Parliament the views of the Opposition with respect to a public measure of first importance and of grave national concern. In this particular instance it so happened that the measure was one more important and far reaching in its possible effects than any introduced in the House since Confederation. The first vote to deny this right to Sir Wilfrid Laurier was cast by Mr. Borden himself, and the method taken was such as to make it impossible to believe that there was not intended by it, with the knowledge, consent and active participation of the Prime Minister a studied insult to the veteran Statesman who today is the oldest member of the Canadian House of Commons, and who for over 25 years as the leader of the Liberal party in Canada has been the most chivalrous of opponents, and for fifteen years as Prime Minister of the Dominion, the most distinguished figure in Canadian public life.

#### **How Sir Wilfrid Laurier was Prevented from Replying to Mr. Borden.**

The pre-arranged plan as carried out was as follows: Mr. Borden having concluded his speech, Sir Wilfrid immediately rose to reply; Mr. Hazen, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries rose at the same time. The Speaker, following the custom of Parliament, recognized Sir Wilfrid, who was proceeding with his speech, when members of parliament on the Conservative side of the House began pounding their desks with a view of making it impossible for Sir Wilfrid to be heard and of attracting the Speaker's attention to the circumstance that Mr. Hazen was also standing. The Speaker, whose duty it is to preserve order, was obliged to rise and inform the House as to who, according to his judgment, had the floor and the right to speak; this he did in the following words: "The Honourable member for East Quebec, (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) is accorded the floor." No sooner was this said than Mr. W. B. Northrup, Conservative