

accept the amendment of the right hon. leader of the Opposition; but such a revision must be made by a joint committee, by mutual consent, as has been done in the past in the Canadian Parliament and in the British House of Commons. I advocate a revision of the rules on which both sides of the House agree; but I strenuously object to gag and guillotine imposed on His Majesty's loyal Opposition by an arrogant majority. Sir, the Government is already ashamed of its action and in the country through its devoted press it is spreading, I shall not say lies, the word is not parliamentary, but mis-statements. I have seen headlines in the Tory press of Canada: Laurier caught in his own nets.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: The hon. gentlemen cheer that statement; they accept it. More than that, my hon. friend, one of the most distinguished members of this Parliament, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Meighen), did not hesitate to state the other evening, in answer to a question which was put to him, that the right hon. the leader of the Opposition was himself the author of clause 17 of the rules of this House.

Mr. MEIGHEN: As it now stands, in its present form.

Mr. LEMIEUX: That is a quibble, and I shall explain my hon. friend's evasion in one moment. I interrupted the hon. member the other day. He was saying:

When Sir Wilfrid Laurier was Prime Minister of this country on the 9th of July, 1906, he, in pursuance of a long evolution leading to perfection of the rules of this House, placed rule 17 there just in the form in which it is to-day. Did he place it there that it might never be acted upon? Did he place it there that whenever it was acted upon for a definite and perfectly legitimate purpose hon. members opposite should howl themselves hoarse shouting shame?

Mr. Lemieux: Does my hon. friend mean to say that the inventor of the previous question was the right hon. the leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Meighen: I say that rule 17, which this Government availed itself of in order to permit the previous question to be moved, was placed in the rule book by the right. hon. the leader of the Opposition.

Worse still, in the press of my own province, the reptile press, it is stated that the leader of the Opposition is himself the inventor of the previous question. Let us settle this point. Rule 17 has been, word for word, the rule of this House since Confederation and it was in existence under the Union. On December 20, 1867, a motion was made by Sir John A. Macdonald, who was not a gagger, who never used guillotines to suppress his opponents:

M. LEMIEUX.

Sir John A. Macdonald moved, seconded by Hon. Mr. McDougall:

Resolved, that this House will immediately resolve itself in a committee on the report of the Select Committee appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in framing rules and regulations for the government of this House. The House accordingly resolved itself into the said committee and after some time spent therein, Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair, &c.

First, we have the regulations and then come the rules of debate:

(11) 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.'

Is the right hon. the leader of the Opposition the inventor of rule 17, which is the reproduction of rule 11? Is the right hon. gentleman the inventor of that procedure which is as old as Confederation, and was in the rules accepted by the legislative assemblies of the Union? My hon. friend, I know, quibbled by saying that this rule has been amended, and that the right hon. gentleman was a member of the committee who amended it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman states that the rule in the form in which he read it was placed there by Sir John A. Macdonald who was not a gagger; is the inference that the right hon. the leader of the Opposition, who added to it the clause that it should not be debatable, a gagger?

Mr. LEMIEUX: My hon. friend should be worthy of himself and live up to his reputation. He made a fair defense the other evening of the tyrannical resolution proposed to this House, but he should not stretch too much on his ingenuity and his adroitness. I may say that rule 17 has been in force in Canada ever since Confederation, but this is the first time it has been applied. To my hon. friend from East Hastings (Mr. Northrup) and my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Hazen), belongs the credit of having first availed themselves of that obnoxious rule. Against whom, Mr. Speaker? Against the dean of the House of Commons, not in age, but in experience, in prestige and in statesmanship; against the nestor of the Imperial conferences, as he was declared to be by no less an authority than the Prime Minister of England. The previous question has been put in this House on four occasions only since Confederation, once by Mr. Holton in 1870; later on in 1879 at the time of the Letellier case, by one of your predecessors, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Mr. Justice Ouimet, who was then member for Laval; by the late Minister of Public Works, Sir Hector Langevin, in the Riel case, and the other day when my hon. friend (Mr. Hazen)