

directly interested in these votes, helping to pass them. That I consider an abuse of the privileges of parliament, and we ought to devise some rule whereby that may be avoided.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. It might be desirable some time or other to make some amendment to this rule. Sometimes men who are applicants for a charter or members of a corporation speak and vote and work in the committees which are considering charters or corporate interests just as if they had nothing to do with them. This is undesirable. In Great Britain a very strict procedure is laid down:

Every member of a committee on an opposed private Bill must before attending sign a declaration that his constituents have no local interest and that he has no personal interest in the Bill.

Not only do they prohibit attendance in the case of personal interest but also where a member's constituents are interested.

Mr. HAGGART. That is absurd.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. It only shows how strict they are, and, without going that far, we might be a little stricter than we have been. There is no reason why these rules should not be looked over every session. In Great Britain they are revised pretty often.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The rule as it is, I think, is all right, but there are other considerations mentioned by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition which are worthy of attention. But his suggestion, carried to a logical conclusion, would involve not only revising this particular rule but the Independence of Parliament Act. Under that Act a member cannot, in his individual capacity, make a contract with the government, no matter how insignificant, without imperilling his seat, but any corporation, of which he is a member, can take a government contract to any extent without causing him any prejudice. This is the result of the development of corporations, and it is a matter very difficult to deal with. I think we had better at present keep to the rule as we have it.

On rule 24,

1. Every member is bound to attend the service of the House unless leave of absence has been given him by the House.

2. There shall be prepared daily a list of members attending the House, and such a list shall be recorded in the votes and proceedings for the day.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The first rule is the old one and the second is a new one. It is the same as the rule in the Senate.

Mr. URIAH WILSON. How are you to obtain the leave of the House? I never heard a member asking leave of absence.

Mr. EMMERSON. In the New Brunswick local legislature, if any one wishes to absent himself, a member makes the motion on his behalf.

Mr. HAGGART. It used to be the practice here but the rule has fallen into desuetude.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. This is a relic of the time when controverted elections were under the jurisdiction of this House. Members on these committees frequently desired to get away.

Mr. SPROULE. If there is no attention paid to this rule, you might as well drop it.

Mr. HAGGART. Under this rule, a member is obliged to be present at the committee unless specially excused by the House. I have often seen a member reported for non-attendance and in such a case the House could inflict a penalty. A case may occur when this rule may be absolutely necessary.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I have no recollection of any such case.

Mr. HAGGART. I have known where committees reported members for non-attendance.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That was before 1874, when this House tried election cases.

Mr. HAGGART. There may arise a case in which the attendance of members may be considered important and this rule might be applied.

Mr. FIELDING. In such a case, without any general rule, the House could by motion excuse a member from attendance.

Mr. COCHRANE. It is most absurd to say that a member should apply to the House for permission to absent himself when it is provided that if he is away more than a certain number of days he loses a part of his indemnity.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I would have a good deal of reluctance to see the rule struck out. According to May:

Attendance upon the service of parliament includes the obligation to fulfil the duties imposed upon members by the orders and regulations of the House. And, unless leave of absence has been obtained, a member cannot excuse himself from attending a committee when his attendance, as in the case of a private Bill Committee, is made compulsory by standing or other orders.

It is perhaps not generally recognized that it is a rule compulsory on every member to attend the committees. If the rules of the House were strictly carried out, every member who failed to attend a committee would subject himself to the censure of the House. I would be disinclined to alter the rule.