

land, of course, for this matter to be inquired into by the committee on privileges and elections?

I wish to refer again to the case that engaged the attention of the house in the days of Sir John Macdonald after the election of 1887. The Hon. J. A. Chapleau, then Secretary of State, wrote a letter to the Speaker of the house in which he pointed out that three translators of the house had spoken very ill of him, and of other members as well. His complaint was corroborated by the Hon. W. B. Ives, a supporter of the government. These complaints were put in writing. They specified the language used by the translators, who had spoken of members of the house as having been guilty of hanging Riel at the instance of the Orange lodges, with many other sentiments of that kind which I shall not take the time of the house to read. But those sentiments were expressed by these translators; a letter of complaint was written to the Speaker, and the Speaker sent the papers down to the committee on debates. The committee on debates gave the matter much consideration and finally came to the conclusion that it should be sent to the committee on privileges; whereupon the Speaker called together the internal economy commissioners, Sir John A. Macdonald himself being one of them, and they met together. The translators gave their version of the matter and said: "We have a right to do what we please when we are not working on our translation because we are appointed not by the government but by the house, and it was understood that we could do as we pleased when our work as translators for the house had been completed." But in the opinion of all who spoke that was hardly a sound rule, and at any rate section 55 of our Civil Service Act covers the situation.

Then on February 28, 1888, Mr. Wilfrid Laurier, at the very opening of the house, said:

Before the orders of the day are called, I beg to rise to a question of privilege. I am informed that you, Mr. Speaker, in the exercise of the power which you have assumed as Speaker of this house, have dismissed three of the translators of the debates from the positions which they had received at the hands of the house. I may say at once, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to your decision, and in my humble judgment, that I have not the least doubt that you have exceeded your authority and invaded the privilege of this house.

The matter again came to the attention of the house on the first day of March. Mr. Speaker having laid before the house certain letters and other papers relating to the dismissal of these translators, it became necessary to consider the matter further, and Mr. Laurier said that he would take this matter

[Mr. Bennett.]

up just as soon as the opportunity presented itself. Later, on the eleventh day of April, the matter was considered carefully and Mr. Laurier used words which I should like to read to the house:

Mr. Laurier: I now rise to bring up the question of privilege of which I gave notice a few days ago, in reference to the dismissal by you, Mr. Speaker, of some of the officers of the house. The last time it was brought up by me, it was understood that it would be taken up again after the close of the debate on reciprocity, and I think no more fitting opportunity will offer than this. I desire to bring this question before the house in order to test the action by which you have discharged what you considered to be your duty as Speaker of this house, in dismissing and depriving the house of the services of three of the officers whom the house had appointed for its convenience and service. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I regret exceedingly that I feel myself obliged, in the discharge of what I conceive to be my duty, as a member of this house, to bring this matter up. Certainly, I think it is the duty of everyone in this house to endeavour to support the Chair in any decision given by the Chair; but if one finds himself obliged conscientiously to differ from the view which the Chair may have taken, it is only right that an opportunity should at once be given to test the question, to see whether the Speaker, under the circumstances, properly or improperly exercised his duty. In this instance, I must say at once that, in my humble judgment, at least, it seems to me that you have taken an erroneous view of the duty with which you were charged in your position as Speaker. I regret it all the more, because it seems to me that the step which you felt it your duty to take was one of extreme hardship to the officers who were dismissed. The officers who were dismissed from the service of the house were Ernest Tremblay, Rémi Tremblay, and A. E. Poirier. All three were translators of the debates of this house.

Then he went on to discuss the matter at length, and among others who participated in that debate was one who afterwards became a justice of the supreme court, Mr. Mills; another who afterwards became chief justice of the supreme court, the late Sir Louis Davies; and one who still survives, the chief justice of Ontario.

Sir John A. Macdonald took the view that under the provisions of the statute these men were properly dismissed because they had had an opportunity to be heard, and that the Speaker was within his rights in taking the action he did. He moved an amendment to the motion of Mr. Laurier condemning the action of the Speaker. The amendment was agreed to by a vote of 113 to 61, and there the matter ended.

There is a precedent that has been established by the high court of parliament. In the course of the debate Mr. Mills spoke of the hardships which the wives and children