

right, and to give it to a member of the Government. And, Sir, every member of the House on that side, including the right hon. gentleman who had only a few moments before promised fair play rose to impose nng upon me, and to prevent me from expressing the views of the Opposition with regard to this very important question. When I saw my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries rising and insisting upon his right to speak, I concluded that he had some great announcement or some important deliverance to make upon this question. But no; he had not a word to say, but to apply closure in anticipation by moving the previous question. What does this mean? What is the conclusion?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Other hon. MEMBERS. Laugh, laugh.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Sir, it means this: closure in anticipation. I had a motion ready to move in amendment; I cannot move it now—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER:—And, by the cheers of the gentlemen who know that I am precluded from moving that motion, I see what measure of fair play we have henceforth to expect.

The Rules of Parliament Destroyed.

Sir, my right hon. friend when he rose to speak, was tumultuously cheered by his friends. These plaudits I thought a tribute of the loyalty of his followers to their leader, and so I thought they were quite in order; but, I reflected that, considering the motion which he had to make and the mission which he had imposed upon himself, perhaps it would have been better taste if he had been allowed to proceed in silence. I understand those plaudits better now after beholding the spectacle which closed his speech. There is some reason to believe that my right hon. friend had no particular relish for the task which he had set for himself, the task of gagging free speech. But my right hon. friend must proceed, whether he relishes it or not. He is like the person in the French novel who said: 'I must follow them, since I am their leader'! I understand now that the plaudits and cheers were meant to urge him upon a most uncongenial task. Because the task which my right hon. friend imposed upon himself this day was not to improve the rules of the Polish Diet. The task which he set himself to accomplish, and which the majority will accomplish, I have no doubt, was simply to put nng upon the rules which we in this House have looked upon almost as sacred, and which have come to us from the Mother of Parliaments. These rules were not made in a day; they are the embodiment of the wisdom of many generations of statesmen and the result of the experience of men whose whole life was devoted to the public welfare, and who brought British institutions to the degree of excellency which they had reached at the time Confederation was established.

We have heard it stated that these rules are antiquated. I do not admit that at all. These rules are not antiquated. They were not made for a day or for a period; they were made for the ages.