

The plan was carried out to the letter, rules devised to secure the freedom of Parliament were forged into weapons to prevent debate, the most sacred precedents were set at naught, the high office of Speaker was made the pivot of a political machine, and this degradation of dignity and right and honour, was carried out by the Prime Minister in the name of "fair play", the security of "the full rights of speech" and "the reasonable freedom of debate". Little wonder that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking later in the day after the motion preventing him from moving an amendment had been adopted should have been led to exclaim, "We are in the minority; we can be gagged; we can be prevented from expressing our opinions; they can trample upon our rights. But, Sir, the day of reckoning will come, and it will come as seen as we have a dissolution of the present Parliament".

The full text of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speech on this occasion is as follows:—

SIR WILFRID LAURIER'S SPEECH.

SIR WILFRID LAURIER: The spectacle of which we were witnesses when the right hon. Prime Minister concluded his remarks and placed in your hands, Mr. Speaker, the motion now before the House, was a very apposite commentary upon the speech of my right hon. friend. All through that speech the right hon. gentleman stated and reiterated that the object of the Government in proposing this new resolution was not to impede in any way the freedom of debate or to prevent free discussion, but simply to avoid the abuse of it. My right hon. friend was profuse of declarations that the minority, when these rules have been adopted, can always rely upon fair play; but the words were scarcely out of his lips when we were brought to realize how much fair play we may expect at the hands of hon. gentlemen opposite.

Constitutional Rights and Privileges Ignored.

By the unwritten law of Parliament, not to speak of the courtesy which generally prevails between the two sides of the House, it is expected that when the Prime Minister brings an important measure to the consideration of the House, the Opposition, by its leader, shall be allowed to present the views which are entertained on the other side. Firmly entertaining that impression, I rose to my feet: but great was my surprise when I saw the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Hazen) had risen at the same time. You saw him, Mr. Speaker, and you saw me, and, in the exercise of that authority which belongs to your office, in the exercise of that fair play which had been promised us not five minutes before, you called on me, as leader of the Opposition to take the floor. And, I presume, still exercising that fair play which we were promised by the leader of the Government in introducing these rules, the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Northrup) asked the House to take from me the privilege which was mine by constitutional