

Bills and orders. I will not mention those brought in by Opposition members, but merely those introduced by members supporting the Administration, to show what they deem most important questions. And yet all of them have been set aside for the present because of the naval proposition of the Government. They deal with the use of flags, the Bank Act, the Criminal Code, the Companies Act, the hours of labour on public works, the Dominion Elections Act, the Railway Act, the Naturalization Act, and the Lord's Day Act. Another, which I suppose has its importance, refers to the abolition of titles of honour in Canada, and there are several adjourned debates. Then there is one dealing with the Dominion Lands Act, another with the Canadian Pacific railway, another with the pollution of navigable waters, and one to amend the Juvenile Delinquents Act. All these matters have been allowed to stand, and I mention them to show what important questions are before the House and to point out the great mistake which in my opinion the Government has made in insisting on the solution of one question to the exclusion of everything else. The last time that a revision of the rules of this House took place—and there are many members here who will remember the circumstances, since it happens that most of those who took part in the debate are still members of the House,—was on the 14th December, 1909, not very long ago. The right hon. leader of the Opposition, then Prime Minister, in keeping with the time-honoured custom in such matters, moved:

That a special committee of nine members be appointed, with instructions to carefully examine the rules of the House, to report what changes in their opinion might be adopted with the view to simplify, accelerate and expedite business; and that the said committee be composed of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Brodeur, Mr. Pugsley, Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Carvell, Mr. Borden (Halifax), Mr. Haggart (Lanark), Mr. Barker and Mr. Doherty.

With the exception of two of the gentlemen here named all are still members of this House; one has gone over to the great majority and the other has been elevated to a seat upon the bench of the highest court in the land.

It is unfortunate that this present moment, when we are going to make such an important change, the Prime Minister did not deem it advisable to at least follow what was the ordinary procedure of Parliament. When the previous question was moved by the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Hazen), my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) had in his hand an amendment proposing that the time-honoured custom of referring the rules to a select committee for

the purpose of examining them should be followed. Had the Prime Minister moved the appointment of such a committee, the ministerial party would have been in the majority on this committee, the minority would have agreed or disagreed, the report would have come into the House, it would have been referred to the general committee of the House, as has always been done, and it would have been ratified and become binding on all parties. There is no member of this House who will pretend that although great care seems to have been given to the drafting of the proposed new rules, any law was ever drawn up that was not susceptible of being amended. These rules before long may be amended in a very important particular, in fact, we have the promise of the Prime Minister that, at the next session, he will, if he deems it necessary, appoint a committee to deal with the rules, which can be taken as an acknowledgment that they are not perfect. When this proposed amendment was offered to the House, he was willing, if the leader of the Opposition had agreed, to insert an amendment to the last paragraph of the third sub-section which deals with the consent which is to be obtained for your leaving the Chair, Mr. Speaker, on Thursdays and Fridays. I understood that the leader of the Opposition did not consent to this amendment because he had other amendments to make and wanted to discuss the whole question. I think it is rather unfortunate that this procedure of a Select Committee was not followed because it might have entailed a few more days of the time of Parliament, but it was important in the public interest that it should have been followed. To show the House how careful hon. gentlemen, who are now in office, were when, on the 14th December, 1909, my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, then Prime Minister, moved the appointment of this committee and followed the procedure that has been laid down from time immemorial, let me quote a little further from the discussion which took place upon that occasion. When this proposal was made by the Prime Minister of that day, the leader of the Opposition, who is now the Prime Minister, made a few remarks which stand in striking contrast with the attitude which he now assumes with regard to these changes in the rules. He said:

I see no objection whatever to the appointment of this committee and to some revision of our rules. I do not know that there is anything in present conditions that especially calls for amendment. I do think that some time might be saved in our proceedings, particularly in the answers to questions. Sometimes we take up an hour or even an hour and a half with answers to questions which