

in such a high-handed manner that the hon. leader of the Opposition, the most courteous statesman that Canada has ever known, was precluded from moving an amendment to the said resolution.

Redlich, in his authoritative work upon Parliamentary Procedure, commenting upon closure introduced in the British Parliament, says:

The 'parliamentary guillotine' was then set up for a second time in the House, a desperate expedient for carrying out the inflexible will of the majority. However serious the political circumstances were which drove the Salisbury Cabinet to adopt this plan, there can be no doubt that their procedure was completely out of harmony with the historic character of parliamentary government.

If these remarks are true as applied to parliamentary procedure in England, how much more true are they as applied to parliamentary procedure in Canada, because we must not forget that Canada is not England. The day will come, when owing to its greater area and greater natural resources, Canada will be greater than England in both wealth and population. When that day does come, the rules then or now in force in the mother of parliaments may better suit our needs than the rules we have to-day. But, Mr. Speaker, England attained her greatness and won her reputation with rules similar to those we now have and why should we not wait until we have attained her greatness and her glory, before amending those rules? I say that the rules in Canada should not be amended because Canada is a land of minorities. Take any religion, take any class of citizens, take the descendants of any nationality in Canada to-day, and you will find that they are in the minority. As a minority they are obliged to rely upon the majority in the House of Commons for their rights and privileges. As a representative of the French Canadian minority I am proud to say that until to-day we have had ample opportunity to put forward in this Parliament what we consider our rights and privileges, and these rights and privileges have always been respected. What will happen when that right of free speech is taken away from us, when we can no longer expose to you and to the majority what we consider our rights and privileges, I cannot foretell. What applies to the French Canadian minority in Canada applies to every other minority. Take the British born in Canada to-day and put the rest of Canada against them and you will find that they are in a minority. Take the labourers of Canada to-day, place the remainder of Canada against them, and you will find that the labourers, who are to-day represented in this House by one sole representative, are in a minority. Take the manufacturers, who, perhaps are at the

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back of this closure, they, if taken individually or taken as a group, compared with the rest of the population of Canada are in a minority. Take the Roman Catholics of Canada to-day; numerous as they are, they have what they consider to be their just rights which they wish to maintain, but they are in a minority. Take the great Orange Order of Canada, with all its strength, power and prestige, and place against them the mass of the people of Canada who do not agree with them in politics and religion, and you will find that the great Orange Order is in a minority. This is a country of minorities with the possible exception of the poor farmers. The farmers of Canada are in a majority, but are they exercising the rights and receiving the privileges of a majority? They are considered in this Parliament as a minority, and they have been treated as a minority. The railway, manufacturing and banking magnates are always seeking privileges from Parliament and urging compensation for the great sacrifices as they call them, which they have made in building up Canada. This Parliament should consider the real sacrifices that are being made daily, without murmur, by thousands and tens of thousands of men and women in log cabins on the western edge of civilization, many miles from railways, schools or churches, rearing families and developing the country in the face of physical and spiritual and social deprivation, of whose hardihood a grateful nation might well afford some recognition.

In introducing this resolution the other day the Prime Minister spoke as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the resolution which I have the honour to move this afternoon touches a very important subject, because it must be apparent to all hon. gentlemen in this House that unless we have such rules as will permit the reasonable transaction of public business, and prescribe the ordinary and proper conduct of debate, Parliament must fail in its chief function, and the proceedings of this House are liable to be brought into disrepute and contempt. No one is more ready than I to acknowledge that liberty of speech and freedom of debate must be preserved, but I venture respectfully to suggest that these privileges must be observed and maintained under such conditions that they shall not be allowed to degenerate into license and obstruction.

What does that mean? It means that the Prime Minister in introducing this closure resolution did so because he considered himself face to face with obstruction on this side of the House. Was he really in the face of obstruction? I claim that he was not. I claim that the amendment is unnecessary because only four times since Confederation has there been anything like obstruction in this House of Commons. In 1896 and 1911 that obstruction was justified by the verdict given by the people of Can-