

introduced the closure, and there is the page in which he sought by conciliation to give justice to Ireland. Our friends opposite select the first page; we select the last.

An Appeal to the People, Not Closure, the Proper Method.

As I have said, there are some occasions on which there is a cleavage between the majority and the minority, and then there is an easy remedy, an easy solution. The remedy is not closure; it is not the application of brute force. The remedy is an appeal to the people. The people, after all, are the judge and the jury. The people, after all, are the parties to pass judgment as between the Government and the Opposition, as between the majority and the minority; and, Sir, the least I would have expected on such an occasion as this was that the Government of the day would have adopted that remedy, and not have resorted to closure. I am sure it was not a pleasant task that my right hon. friend performed to-day; and, for my part, when I compare my conduct with his conduct, I am proud that I resisted all applications for closure, and that when the time came I appealed to the people, as I did on reciprocity. My right hon. friend stated, not to-day but the last time when he spoke upon that question, that the remedy which I suggested was absurd, because, he said, if upon every occasion on which there was obstruction the Government were obliged to go to the country, we might every year have a general election. Let me tell my right hon. friend that there is no sense in such an objection, because obstruction cannot be of any avail unless it is backed up by a strong expression of public opinion, and unless it be on some most important question. If there were at any time in this House a political party so oblivious to the respect it owes to itself and to the country as to obstruct upon a trivial question, that party would lose all the confidence it might have in the country and any chance of ever again creating an impression upon the people. But, Sir, there is a better reason than that. When we come to discuss these constitutional questions, these questions of public policy, the best authority after all is the authority of history. Confederation will have been in existence forty-six years next July, and how many times has there been obstruction during these past forty-five years? Just four times before this year. Let me recall them. There was obstruction in 1885, in 1896, in 1908, and in 1911, and after I have mentioned the causes for the obstruction on these several occasions, I shall have furnished the most complete justification for the attitude we have taken upon the present occasion.

Instances of Obstruction in the Canadian Parliament.

There was obstruction in 1885. In that year the Government of Sir John A. MacDonald introduced a uniform franchise bill for the Dominion. Up to that date the franchise had been under the control of the several provinces, each province having its own franchise. While in two or three provinces there was manhood suffrage, in the others there was a diverse franchise, and we of the