

some English party for its own sake, for the sake of England, for the sake of the English Parliament, and for the sake of the British Empire. When that proposal was made it would be time enough to consider whether it could be accepted as an honest compromise or not. He, for his part, did not believe they would have very long to wait until some such proposal was made.

Sir Robert Reid, in 1902, speaking at the National Liberal Club, used the following language:

He had always been of opinion, and had publicly expressed it, that the Irish question was incapable of solution except by a system of general devolution. It was not Irish affairs merely that obstructed the business in the House of Commons. It was English and Scottish and Imperial business that stopped the way.

I could also quote Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Balfour, and several others; but this shows that, at all events, if since the obstruction of Parnell and his followers in the House of Commons, both great historical parties in England have limited debate, by establishment of closure, guillotine and supply rule, it is because of the extreme congestion of public business in that House. Sir, is that the case with us? Has it any analogy to the case of the Canadian Parliament? Here, who thinks, as in the case of Parnell and his friends, of opposing all the measures of a government—of discrediting the machinery of government? We oppose the bad measures. We oppose at present one measure because we believe that it is detrimental in its effects to the constitution of this country and to our relations with the Mother Country. We say that it is an attempt to do away with the autonomy of Canada. We oppose one measure, not all measures. Have we refused supply? Indeed we have helped and materially helped the Government in passing supply, and I only regret that we were too generous because there are many instances, in the Post Office Department for example, where I would like to have a sharp look.

Mr. BUREAU: Don't forget the locks.

Mr. LEMIEUX: The present resolution tends to put majority rule tyrannically over the minority in this House. It serves only party ends; moreover, it will incense public opinion, and we fairly represent a good half of the Canadian public. Sir, the revision of the rules of the Canadian House of Commons should be submitted to a joint committee, and it is not too late yet for the right hon. leader of the Government to accept that suggestion.

There is not in this Parliament any great congestion. Of course, Canada is increasing in population, and we have great national enterprises, which require large expenditure of money; but after all we can

Mr. LEMIEUX.

deal with the business of this country in a fair manner. There are no seven hundred members as I have said, and if it is found that the work of this House is somewhat congested, why not originate more of the legislation in the Upper House? The Senators themselves complain that there are in the Senate every year too many adjournments and that not enough legislation originates in their Chamber.

Besides, and I wish to speak with the greatest reserve in making this argument—this is not a uni-lingual parliament; this is a bi-lingual parliament where both the English and the French languages are on a footing of equality by the constitution of the country. I thank the Lord that since Confederation no encroachment has ever been made by the Conservative leaders on the right of the minority to use its own language in this Parliament. But fine words butter no parsnips, as the old adage says. We are told by the right hon. leader of the Government that under the closure all rights will be protected, all privileges will be respected. But what of that rule which at one moment will confine our legislative work to a very few hours of the day? It may happen under certain circumstances that those of us who generally speak the English language will consume all the time allowed before the guillotine falls; and then, if a member of the minority who uses the French language, should rise to address the Chair, he will be told: 'Time is up, the guillotine is applied, you have no right to speak.' I do not say that this will happen; I hope it never will. I have enough confidence in the sense of fair play, of justice, of generosity, of liberality, in the majority of this House to believe that it will never happen. But still it might happen, and you cannot juggle with the rights of the minority. It is my duty to speak thus as a representative of a constituency in the province of Quebec. My province at the time of Confederation accepted the compact of Cartier and Macdonald that the rules, usages, customs of the British House of Commons up to 1867 should be binding in the Parliament of Canada in future. Therefore you have no right to impose on the minority in this House rules which have been created since 1867, and which tend to abridge the rights of the minority.

Sir, I do not know that the measure introduced by the right hon. leader of the Government is constitutional. I do not argue the point, but I leave it to your judgment. Has anyone the right to alter a compact, to change the constitution? For the rules adopted in 1867 are embodied in that compact, in that constitution, and you cannot deface them. Sir, what does the resolution mean? As I stated a moment ago, Canada with such drastic rules