

chapter 6 of the statutes of 1923, entitled "An act to extend the duration of and amend certain provisions of the Local Authorities (Financial Provisions) Act, 1921, and the Poor Law Emergency Provisions (Scotland) Act, 1921." That act was passed on the 17th of May, 1923. Section 1 of that act reads as follows:

1. Section one of the Local Authorities (financial provisions) Act, 1921 (which provides for the temporary extension of charges on the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund), shall continue in force until the first day of April, nineteen hundred and twenty-four, as if in that section for the words "thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and twenty-two," there were substituted the words "first day of April, nineteen hundred and twenty-four."

The measure which is before the house follows by the terms of the amendment now proposed exactly the form of this remedial statute from which I have just quoted and which extended for more than one year the previous provisions of two acts of 1921, for the relief of the poor and emergency provisions for the relief of distress and suffering, which were then no longer in force.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Has my hon. friend the resolution which preceded that English bill?

Mr. CAHAN: I have not looked up the resolution preceding the bill, but I am not concerned with the resolution because there is absolutely no doubt that when the resolution preceding this measure was introduced it was introduced before the expiry of the act. In the case cited the resolution, which preceded an amendment for the revival of what my right hon. friend would call a dead statute, must have been preceded by a similar resolution. Anyway I will state this, for what reputation I have in parliament, that the procedure which was followed on that occasion and the content of the amending measure which was then enacted establish a thorough-going precedent for the bill now before the house.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If my hon. friend will look at my remarks of this afternoon, he will see that I said that the form in which this bill was presented and its content were perfectly regular, and what the government ought to have done, if it intended to do as it had the years before, was to proceed in that way from the start. I took no exception to the form and content.

Mr. CAHAN: I cannot follow my right hon. friend through his many tergiversations, because I have listened to him repeat over and

over again that we could not revive a dead statute, that we could not amend a dead statute.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I said you could revive it, but that you could not amend it.

Mr. CAHAN: You can revive it by an amendment, as these precedents I have quoted conclusively show. I do not really know when to take my right hon. friend seriously in this debate; for he has adopted so many attitudes pro and con.

There is another matter to which I would like to direct the attention of the right hon. gentleman. I have heard his great leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and the right hon. gentleman himself, frequently extol Mr. Gladstone as one who assisted in a very large way in developing responsible government under parliamentary institutions in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. I have before me the British parliamentary debates for the session of 1882, under date of February 20, and I find at page 1124, that when Mr. Gladstone introduced into the parliament of the United Kingdom the new rule of closure, he stated very frankly and fully the grounds on which he based the adoption of that rule. At page 1138 he says:

It is difficult, I believe, to find a single instance of a great legislative assembly which has not found it necessary to adopt some rule for the purpose of placing in the hands of the assembly itself the power of restricting the duration of debate.

He then proceeded at page 1140:

And here I come to what is commonly called obstruction. It is not a very easy matter to define obstruction, and I will not attempt to define it for anyone but myself. I will only give my description of it. To me it appears to be the disposition either of the minority of the house or of individuals to resist the prevailing will of the house otherwise than by argument.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. CAHAN: I ask the right hon. gentleman, as one who all his life admired the great Liberal leader and has often extolled Liberal principles as enunciated by him, to apply the words of Mr. Gladstone to what has transpired in this House of Commons during the last three weeks.

Then after referring to obstruction by lengthy speeches and reiteration of arguments Mr. Gladstone proceeded to say, at page 1144:

They are not merely most powerful means of obstruction; they are not merely most powerful means of inflicting suffering on the members of this house. They are totally incompatible with the dignity and credit of this house.

Grievous as they are, they are almost as ludicrous in the eyes of the community as they