

whose gallant band of seven followers had been increased to more than eighty, and we know what took place then in the House of Commons. Obstruction was systematized and when, in January, 1881, a Bill for the protection of persons and property in Ireland was proposed, it was strenuously opposed by the Irish members. It was then that Mr. Speaker Brand intervened and put the question on his own motion. On February 2, Mr. Gladstone gave notice of the urgency rule, that, if the House so resolved by a majority of three to one, that the state of public business was urgent, the whole power of the House to make rules, would be, and would remain, with the Speaker until he should declare that the state of public business was no longer urgent. Grave scenes followed, all of the Irish members were ejected but the rule of urgency was passed. In 1882, closure was formally established. It was applied when called for by more than two hundred members, or, when less than forty members had voted against it, by more than one hundred members. In 1887, a Conservative Government came into office. The Crimes Act was introduced and the rule was further amended. Any member during the debate might move that the question be now put. Thus the initiative was transferred from the Speaker to the House, of course with the consent of the House; but Mr. Gladstone opposed this. In 1888, the closure was again strengthened by the reduction of the majority necessary for its enforcement from 200 to 100. In 1887 a time limit, in other words, the guillotine, was also invented and applied. It means that the House decides how much time shall be devoted to certain stages of a measure, definite dates being laid down at which the closure shall be enforced and division taken. Then later on, a Supply rule was adopted. The old rule, that the redress of grievances should precede the voting of money, was also altered. In fact, the House of Commons in Great Britain has lost steadily its power. That, Sir, has been the evolution of parliamentary government in Great Britain since 1875.

Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden, in this Parliament of Canada, where different conditions prevail, we are face to face at one fell swoop with closure, guillotine and Supply rules. Sir, I say that the conditions are radically different. First of all, the Irish members in the British House of Commons were opposed not to one measure, but to all measures. Consequently, the rules of the British House of Commons were amended so as to enable the King's Government to be carried on, but only after years of elaboration and years of discussion. The two great historical parties, the Conservative party and the Liberal party, met in joint committees and amended those ancient rules. There is this fur-

ther point to consider. The House of Commons in England is composed of nearly 700 members. It has not even a seating capacity for its full membership; and on what the English people are pleased to call a field day in the House of Commons you can see members crowding the galleries. It is well known that there is and has been for a long time a congestion of business in the British Parliament. I do not wish to detain the House more than is necessary; but on this point let me quote the leading parliamentarians in England. Indeed, it is that very congestion of business in the British Parliament which will make it possible for Ireland eventually to obtain home rule, for Wales to obtain home rule, for Scotland to obtain home rule, and for England to obtain home rule. I would not be surprised if in England proper, in Northumbria for instance, there would be an English local legislature. The whole plan of devolution has been devised, has been accepted of late by Liberals and even by Tories on account of the congestion of public business in the British House of Commons. What did Mr. Gladstone say on this subject? Speaking so far back as 1879, in his second Midlothian speech, Mr. Gladstone said:

The Parliament is over-weighted. The Parliament is almost overwhelmed. If we can take off its shoulders that superfluous weight by the constitution of secondary and subordinate authorities, I am not going to be frightened out of a wise measure of that kind by being told that I am condescending to the prejudices of the Home Rulers. I will condescend to no such prejudices. I will consent to give Ireland no principle, nothing that is not upon equal terms offered to Scotland and to the different parts of the United Kingdom. But I say that the man who shall devise a machinery by which some portion of the excessive and impossible task now laid upon the House of Commons shall be shifted to the more free, and therefore more efficient, hands of secondary and local authorities, will confer a blessing upon his country that will entitle him to be reckoned among the prominent benefactors of the land.

He made a similar speech at Edinburgh in 1890. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, speaking in 1895 at Stirling, used the following language:

The excessive burden of work now imposed upon Parliament can only be relieved by a large system of devolution. It is for this reason, as well as from a sense of right and justice to the nationalities concerned, that I regard as urgently necessary the creation for the three kingdoms of subordinate legislative assemblies dealing with the distinctive features of each.

Mr. Asquith spoke along the same lines in 1901. Mr. John Redmond said at Dublin in the same year:

When Home Rule was next proposed it would not be in answer to an abject appeal from Ireland, but it would be proposed by