

organized obstruction to Lord John Russell's Reform Bill in 1831 and 1832. Mr. Gladstone obstructed the passing of the Divorce Act to the very best of his power. Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Leonard Courtney, and Mr. Chamberlain kept, with Mr. Parnell's assistance, the House of Commons at work for more than one all-night sitting. But there was a very distinct difference between Mr. Parnell's policy and that of other men. Obstruction in other cases had to do with some particular measure, which its opponents were determined not to allow to pass into law if they could by any constitutional process forbid to go further; or, with regard to certain questions, it was an obstruction which said to the Government of the day: 'You shall not have this measure at all unless you allow into it certain amendments which we propose to make.' But Mr. Parnell's obstruction had a different and a wider object. It is not likely that he saw in the first instance the full use that might be made of the instrument he was employing. But the idea soon dawned upon him and overspread his strong mind. He was not a lover of England; he was not in feeling much of a Democrat. But he was thoroughly convinced that if the attention of the English people, and more especially of the English democracy, could be really aroused to the Irish national claim, the conscience of the majority of Englishmen would be compelled to recognize its justice and the cause of home rule would be gained. Now, that and nothing else was the meaning of Mr. Parnell's policy of obstruction—the policy which he carried on for example, after Mr. Gladstone had come into office in 1880, and when Parnell was made leader of the Irish party. Many people set him down merely as a man who, out of some sort of sinister purpose or malignity, wished to interfere with and harass, obstruct, and irritate every English Government and the whole House of Commons. Mr. Parnell had no feeling of the kind. His was a deliberate purpose, and it was even by the process of exasperation that he tried to fix the attention of the House and the country on the fact that there was an Irish national demand, which it would be necessary to listen to and to take into consideration. Parnell's creed was that the House of Commons was the one great public platform of the country. From that platform he was determined to appeal to and arouse the English people. Therefore he said in substance to the House of Commons: 'If you will not listen to our Irish national claim, then we will not allow you to discuss any other question whatever of which we can prevent the discussion.'

You have there a description of the modus operandi adopted by Mr. Parnell and his gallant followers in 1880. They had one object in view—the disruption of the whole political machinery so as to call the attention of England and of the world to their Irish national claims. Mr. Justin McCarthy continues:

He acted on the inspiration of the woman in the Eastern story—of which woman he had
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probably never heard—who, having tried in vain to get a petition delivered to the Sultan, took her place with her little children in the public street, and waited until the Sultan rode that way, and then flung herself and her babes in front of his horse's hoofs, and declared that she would not move from that spot until he had listened to her appeal or had trampled her and hers to death. That was the real meaning of the later policy of obstruction.

Sir, our position is not parallel, is not analogous and, therefore, we should not find our precedents in the rules and regulations adopted during those stirring times, in the English House of Commons with a view to prevent freedom of speech in this Canadian Parliament. Closure and the guillotine were resorted to in England to meet special conditions. A desperate remedy was invented to meet a desperate condition. What do we read in the life of Gladstone? My right hon. friend the Prime Minister and my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie (Mr. Meighen) quoted Gladstone. He seemed to take pleasure in the fact that the great Gladstone had established closure in the British Parliament. What does Morley, the historian of Gladstone, say when he speaks of that subject? Morley, in his life of Gladstone, volume 3, page 124, says:

The remedies proposed from time to time in this Parliament by Mr. Gladstone were various, and were the occasion of many fierce and stubborn conflicts. But the subject is in the highest degree technical, and only intelligible to those who, as Mr. Gladstone said, 'pass their lives within the walls of parliament'—perhaps not by any means to all even of them. His papers contain nothing of interest or novelty upon the question either of devolution or of the compulsory stoppage of debate. We may as well, therefore, leave it alone, only observing that the necessity for the closure was probably the most unpalatable of all the changes forced on Mr. Gladstone by change in social and political circumstance.

Mark the expression: 'most unpalatable.' Sir, closure was a desperate remedy invented in order to meet a desperate condition; but Gladstone who applied it found it 'most unpalatable' to his ingrained liberalism and to his conscience. The first step towards closure was taken in 1880 when a member was named for having wilfully obstructed, having declared that he would oppose all business of whatever kind at all hours. In February, 1880, the House of Commons in England decided that a member named for wilfully obstructing could, on motion, without debate, be suspended and, if he was named three times, he would be suspended for a week. Then the general election of 1880 took place and Mr. Gladstone was returned by a large majority. He met again Mr. Parnell,