

and to have thus secured a free expression of the people's will in the constituencies; and this can be done by reverting to the provincial lists, with conditions and amendments which may be made to those lists when this Bill reaches committee. I sympathize with the hon. member for East Durham (Mr. Craig) in his desire to have a free and fair expression of the people's will. I know what his fairness means. I know he is a man whose mind is free and open to what is reasonable and right, and I am glad to welcome him into the ranks of those who are willing to uphold what is right and what is true rather than those who will support that which is known to be insincere, unpatriotic and incorrect. I am therefore much pleased to hear the statement, and I hope that when the time comes, he will see that this Bill shall go through without giving it undue obstruction, and without—as we have heard from the hon. member for York (Mr. Foster)—fighting it foot by foot and inch by inch. What we want is to do justice to all. We do not want simply to do justice to ourselves. It might be said that if the Franchise Act worked well for the late Government it would work as well for the present Government. Well, that is not our principle. We are not built that way. We believe in doing justice even to our opponents, and we want all to have the advantage of straightforward and honest legislation. We want further to do away with the heavy expense which this Franchise Act has inflicted, not only upon the public treasury, but upon private individuals as well. I shall therefore not only vote against the amendment of the hon. gentleman from York (Mr. Foster) but I shall do everything in my power to assist the Government in repealing the existing Franchise Act and putting in its place a law immeasurably superior, and which will render justice to all.

Mr. SPROULE. Mr. Speaker, I wish to refer to a few subjects to which hon. gentlemen who have spoken have directed their attention. I hold very strongly the view expressed by the hon. member for York (Mr. Foster), that in the interest of our lagging industries, and in the interest of the welfare of our people, we should deal with the tariff before dealing with this franchise law. It is the tariff that the people of Canada are anxious about now, and there can be no urgent need for a new franchise enactment, because, at best, it can only be used for the present in isolated cases where there are bye-elections. The industries of this country are urgently demanding information regarding what the new tariff shall be. They are anxiously awaiting knowledge, as to the basis on which the commercial interests of this country will settle down in the future, and in view of the stagnation of business all over Canada, it does seem to me that we should deal with the tariff question at once, and leave this Franchise Bill in abeyance.

The hon. gentleman (Mr. Frost) has complained that the existing law was not fairly administered and the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) and the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), had the same complaint, viz., that it was administered by partisans appointed by the Government. Well, the friends of these hon. gentlemen are now in power, they will have the administration of the law, and cannot these hon. gentlemen trust their Liberal leaders for a fair administration of it? If we who are in Opposition and have no say in the administration of the law, are satisfied to abide by it and to accept it as a fair and free expression of the will of the electors of the country, surely these gentlemen should have sufficient confidence in their own friends to allow them to carry out the provision of the existing Franchise Act. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Frost) asked: What has the provincial government to do with making up the provincial lists? Is he not aware that the provincial government appoint their own officials to make a registration list before each election in the towns and cities of Ontario? and is he not aware that the same thing takes place in Manitoba, and that partisans of the provincial government—if partisans they may be called—are appointed to make up the provincial lists? In my opinion, the complaint about partisanship applies to provincial officers with tenfold greater force, than it applies to the Dominion officials who are now charged with the duty of revising the lists. The provincial lists in Manitoba are made up only once in four years, or at least before the provincial elections are held, and therefore there must be an old list some time in their history, if the Dominion Government holds an election under them. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Frost) did not propose to deal with the question of the tariff for fear he might say something that he would be obliged to take back in a few days when the fiscal policy of the Government is announced. He seems to have as much knowledge in regard to the line of policy the Government intend to take as many others of his friends have. He is, however, prepared to say "Amen" to whatever policy they bring down, whether it be free trade or protection, and so, for fear that he will be obliged to stultify himself and retract later on, he is afraid to say anything now about the tariff policy of his own friends in office. It is a strange position for the hon. gentleman (Mr. Frost) to find himself in. I wonder that he is not possessed of more intelligence, and more independence to express his own views, if he conscientiously believes them to be right. Why does he not do so, and then endeavour to get his party in accord with them and convince them that they are wrong.

Mr. FROST. What I said was that the tariff was not up for discussion just now, and that there was no necessity for referring to it at the present time.