

the rights that belong to them. If I cannot have the tribal advantages of the Six Nations, I do not want the Six Nations to have the citizen's advantage that I have, and I do not think they have a right to claim them. For that reason, while I would not deprive these Indians of a right, while I have the utmost sympathy for them, I would advise them, if they want to exercise the rights of citizenship, to become citizens of Canada. I think we might as well either dismiss all this work of tinkering with this Bill, and making exceptions here and exceptions there that the provincial laws do not make, or we had better adopt the provincial laws and have done with it. It is a very clean-cut, distinct alternative—on the one hand, adopting the provincial franchises in their entirety, and on the other hand sweeping them all away, and having a franchise of our own. There is properly no middle ground.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I wish to ask the Government what they propose to do in respect to the very important question which has been raised by the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat. I think we should understand at the outset whether the Government intend to take the franchises of the various provinces purely and simply as they exist to-day, and as they may be changed from time to time at the will of the local legislatures all over Canada, and that they shall be the franchises for the election of members to the House of Commons. If I am not mistaken, I think it was the hon. member for Colchester (Mr. McClure) who expressed the wish and the expectation that the officials who were disfranchised from voting in the provincial elections in the province of Nova Scotia would be enfranchised under this Bill, and that they would enjoy the franchise for the election of members to the House of Commons. I believe I am also correct in stating that the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Russell) has also expressed an opinion to that effect, that the officials who are disfranchised under the local laws of Nova Scotia would not be disfranchised under this Act. It therefore becomes important that at the very threshold of this question, when we are dealing with who are to have the franchise, the Government should say whether they intend to adopt, pure and simple, the laws of the various provinces in reference to the parties who enjoy the franchise, and adopt whatever changes they may make in them from time to time, or whether, taking the electoral franchises of the various provinces as a basis, they propose that, as in the case of the Indians who have been enfranchised under the Dominion Act, they shall continue to enjoy this right; or, as in the case of the officials who are disfranchised under the local laws in some of the provinces, they shall be enfranchised under the Dominion.

Mr. CHARLTON.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. The principle of the whole Act is that we intend to adopt the provincial franchises as the basis of the franchise for the Dominion. That is our intention. It is idle for my hon. friend to assume, or to suppose that we assume, that the provincial franchises existing to-day will continue for all time. I cannot follow the argument of hon. gentlemen on the other side who say that we dispossess ourselves of control over our franchise. We do not do anything of the sort; we simply adopt for the present the franchises of the provinces. But if at any time the provinces should do anything that we consider detrimental to the interests of the Dominion, we are entirely free, we do not tie our hands for all time, to make any change that we think proper. We do not dispossess ourselves of our control over the franchise.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I did not at all suggest that. I did not assume that the permanent franchise we adopt by this law is the franchise that exists to-day in Ontario or in Prince Edward Island, that is not proposed by this Bill. This Bill proposes that we shall adopt as the franchise for electing members to this House the franchise as it exists at the time whenever a general election or a by-election is held for this House, that we shall adopt whatever may be at that time the franchise of the provincial legislature.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. As long as this law is in force.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The point I wanted the hon. gentleman to meet was this: Whether my hon. friend who preceded me is right in saying that you do not propose under this Bill to enfranchise any person to vote for a member of the House of Commons who has not the franchise under the local legislature. That is the point I wanted the hon. gentleman to meet.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. We certainly do not intend to adopt amendments, so far as Indians are concerned. When I come to argue that point, I think I will be able to point out that under the provincial franchises, to a large extent, the Indians now have a right to vote. So far as Dominion officials are concerned, that is an open question which I think has been treated from the standpoint of relieving them altogether from this disability. Of course, I am not prepared to say more on that point at the present time.

Mr. LISTER. I want to say a word about the remarks of the hon. member for Norfolk (Mr. Chariton). My hon. friend says the Bill now before the House does not deprive the Indians of their vote.

Mr. CHARLTON. No. The point I made was that this Bill does not absolutely