

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). For my own part I have no objection to the motion. I desire, and I think hon. gentlemen on this side desire, that the business of the Session should be closed at as early a period as possible, and I have no objection to our commencing now an hour or two earlier than ordinarily. I think, however, the First Minister will see that it is very inconvenient to meet at one o'clock, as he knows perfectly well that almost every member of the House lunches at that hour. If he would make it half-past one it would give us an opportunity of having the necessary refreshment before entering on the arduous labors that are now upon Parliament. As we have to remain here until one or two o'clock in the morning, I think if we begin at half-past one in the afternoon we will be putting in a long day.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I cannot resist the solicitations of hon. gentlemen opposite. I would be the last man in the world to injure their health—

Mr. MILLS. Or deprive them of their meals.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I may say that I had arranged to take my lunch at half-past twelve, but as hon. gentlemen desire it—

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). We are not at home like the hon. gentleman; we live at the hotels.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. As hon. gentlemen desire it, we will make the hour half past one.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Does the hon. gentleman intend to have two sessions a day or only one.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Only one.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

THE DISTURBANCE IN THE NORTH-WEST.

Mr. MITCHELL. We have heard a good many rumors of a battle having taken place in the North-West, and we would like to know if the Government has any information which has not yet been given to the public.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The only information we have got is contained in the published reports—the reports at the command of the press.

THE FRANCHISE BILL.

House again resolved itself into Committee on Bill (No. 103) respecting the Electoral Franchise.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I think the motion before the committee is that of my hon. friend from Prince Edward Island (Mr. Macdonald), excepting the Province of Prince Edward Island from the operation of the clause now before the consideration of the committee. I am afraid I cannot yield to that amendment, and for two reasons. In the first place, I am inclined to believe that by the time the qualifications are settled by this committee, the hon. gentleman will find that there are very few, if any, of those who have the franchise in Prince Edward Island, who will not still continue to have it, from the peculiar position of that interesting island. Then, Sir, whether I am correct or not in that opinion, I think this is the wrong time to move the amendment. This amendment excepts Prince Edward Island from the operation of the franchise clause, before we know how the franchise clause will get through the committee. We do not know what the decision of this committee may be as regards the several franchises that are given by that clause. Now, it will be quite clear that we must first settle what the general franchise is which may be adopted for the whole Dominion, and if any portion of the Dominion, or any class in the Dominion, desire to be

excepted, the time to move for such exception is after the general franchise is settled. We must first settle the general franchise over the whole Dominion, and then consider any claims for exception, but until we settle the general system it is quite impossible to consider the exceptions. Then, Sir, the motion, although it is limited to Prince Edward Island, has caused a long discussion in the House which has gone over the whole Bill, and that, I think, has been felt in this discussion in the committee from the beginning. The principle of the Bill, the principle that there should be a franchise for the Dominion, passed by the Dominion Parliament, was adopted after two amendments by this House, and according to regular practice we ought to have proceeded to consider clause after clause consecutively, on their own merits, without entering into a general discussion on the whole Bill. From the importance of the Bill and the earnestness of the gentlemen who are on your left, there was no serious objection made to a renewal of the discussion in committee. However, Sir, that must, I should think, according to parliamentary practice, have its limits. At present, I am sorry to say, the question before this House and this country is not the Franchise Bill; the question is whether representative institutions—whether responsible Government—is going to continue in this country or not.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I am very glad to have the approbation of both sides of the House on that point. Representative institutions, if we are worthy of them, will be carried out in a proper spirit, in a constitutional spirit. And what is a constitutional spirit? It is this that after the minority of the House have had every opportunity of expressing their views, the will of the majority—the decided opinion of the majority—must prevail. If we might trust the language of some of the hon. gentlemen opposite—certainly, I cannot say of the leaders, except the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills)—there appears to be a regularly contrived and organised plan of obstruction. There is no doubt about it; gentlemen on the other side have stated so. The hon. member for the North Riding of York (Mr. Mulock) stated so at our last meeting in so many words. Other gentlemen have said they were going to fight out on this subject all summer. Others have told us this Bill could be fought, and it never would pass. Now, Mr. Chairman, that language is quite inconsistent with representative government, and, if acted upon, must destroy representative government—must show that we are unfit for the institutions that we have obtained from the mother country. I think that great latitude ought to be given to an Opposition; I have been in opposition, and I, with those in the same category as myself, have taken strong grounds as to the rights of an Opposition; but there must be an end to opposition, because, when it is ascertained that all the arguments, all the efforts, all the zeal of the minority in the House, have been insufficient to change the opinion of the majority, then, I think, according to the well understood principle of the British constitution, the minority should yield to the majority. With respect to this particular measure, there can be no doubt of an organisation to oppose the Bill from the beginning. The hon. member for Megantic (Mr. Langelier) brought down several resolutions—half a dozen or more—against the very first clause—the very first word of the second clause, which is in fact the first clause of the Bill; and so it has been continued, and its object has not been concealed. Now, I do not impugn the motives of these hon. gentlemen; I have no parliamentary right to impugn their motives, and I do not desire to impugn the motives of their course. It may have been in their opinion highly important to oppose, by every legitimate opposition, a measure which they think is not for the benefit of the country. I would be the last to attempt in any way