

ment; they do not equalise the right to vote, as they ought to do, to every taxpayer in the country, and they will not, in my opinion, by their adoption, tend to promote that feeling of good will throughout the different classes of the community which it is desirable all legislation emanating from this House should have the effect of promoting. The debate emanating from the discussion on this Bill has excited an amount of acrimonious feeling between the two sides of the House which ought never to have been created. A course has been pursued by hon. gentlemen on the other side which is utterly indefensible, except upon the one principle, that they consider the Bill to be of so serious a character that the effect of it will be to give them no fair play at all, and wipe them out altogether. That is the only justification for their conduct which I can present. I do not mean to say that the Bill will have this effect, but I mean to say this, that if hon. gentlemen opposite happen to come into power—and unlikelier things may happen—I would not like them to have the power in my constituency of nominating the man who shall say who ought to vote for me, and I think it unfair to press a measure of this kind, so objectionable as it is to so many hon. gentlemen, when a very much more simple remedy can be provided, one the tenor of which will be in harmony with the Bill itself, and which will give to all equal justice, from the highest to the lowest. If my right hon. friend will accept the amendment, of which I gave notice three days ago, and which I will read to this House now, an amendment which will wipe out almost the whole of this Bill and give a better and safer franchise to the people, he will put an end to the difficulty which now exists, and settle the question in a manner satisfactory to the people. My amendment is as follows:—

That all that part of section 3, after the word "and," in sub-section 2, of section 3, be struck out, and the following substituted: Has been a resident of the electoral district for twelve months, and has been assessed for and paid his taxes for the current year.

The sub-section referred to declared what the qualification should be, beginning by stating that the voter should be a British subject by birth or naturalisation, and the words I propose to insert will follow. That is the amendment I propose to make at the right time. The right hon. gentleman, the First Minister, has accepted the principle of manhood suffrage by giving to farmers' sons who have no property the right to vote; why should he refuse it to others? Why not extend it to all? Let the hon. gentleman's Bill pass as it is, and go into the hands of the people, and I venture to say that 9 out of 10 men who will take it up will find a difficulty in making out what it means, with all its fancy franchises. Let the hon. gentleman simplify his Bill, keep out the fancy franchises, and adopt a franchise simple in its character, and it will be one that will be satisfactory to the country. I do not know that the amendment I propose will be satisfactory to hon. gentlemen opposite or on this side; but I know it is honest and just in its principle, it will be simple in working out, and I believe would give satisfaction to the people.

Mr. CASEY. The right hon. Premier has given rather a new turn to this discussion and has made it necessary by his remarks to revive a debate which was nearly closed. He said, in the first place, that the whole question on this clause was whether the word person included Indian. It is absolutely necessary to decide that point. The reason for making the definition is evident from the fact that there is no attempt to define the word "person" as including the negro. Why is it not thought necessary to state that the word "person" includes the word negro? Just because nobody has ever doubted that it does. But there appears to be great doubt in the hon. gentleman's own mind and in the minds of those who have looked into the Bill as to whether the word "person," for the purposes of this Bill, does or should include the Indian; whether indeed the

Mr. MITCHELL.

Indian is a person in the political sense of the word at all. I have very great doubts on the question. I am inclined to think an Indian is not a political person, for a political person must be a citizen. The Indian, while under the care of the right hon. gentleman, is not a citizen, not a political person, unless we make him so by special enactment. I think, therefore, the necessity for defining the word "person," in order to carry out the hon. gentleman's intention, is evident, and his intention is equally evident. It is to introduce into the electorate of this country men who are not political persons, who are not citizens, for the purpose of outweighing the votes of men who are full citizens. It is to make a new class of political persons, to make people citizens for one purpose who are not citizens for all purposes. The hon. gentleman went on to say that my hon. friend from South Brant (Mr. Paterson) had claimed, in 1880, that the Indians ought to have the right to vote. But it was to the intelligent Indian that the hon. member for South Brant referred. The Indian who is as fit to vote as a white man should not be excluded, simply because he is not a white man. But how should the admission of a qualified Indian be accomplished? By a change in the definition of the interpreting clause of this Act? No; it should be accomplished by a change in the Indian Act itself, which would make it possible for the intelligent Indian, the Indian who, as the right hon. gentleman says, goes to church and is as prosperous and intelligent as the white man, to become a full citizen. This Bill only gives votes to the Indians, without making them citizens, and I demand now, as I did in 1880, justice for these Indians. In the reserves near my own constituency there are many who answer to the description given by the Premier; who are quite as fit to exercise intelligently their franchise as the white man. For the Indians we claim the justice which this Bill does not give them, that of making them citizens of Canada. This Bill does not make them citizens of Canada. This Bill makes them merely voters. It gives them none of the other rights, makes them subject to none of the other responsibilities of citizenship. I claim that justice for these Indians which the right hon. gentleman has time and again refused to give them.

Committee rose, and it being six o'clock, the Deputy Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

House again resolved itself into committee.

Mr. CASEY. The right hon. gentleman compared the case of the Indian to that of the negro. He remarked that escaped slaves from the Southern States had come into Canada in the state of ignorance and degradation which resulted from years of slavery, and yet, almost immediately, were allowed to take the oath of allegiance and become full citizens of this country, and since that time had been allowed to exercise the franchise, without any protest on the part of anybody. I do not think anybody is inclined to protest against the exercise of the franchise by those negroes, many of whom have proved, in a high degree, their ability to exercise it with benefit to themselves and to the country. But what is it which has made this negro, fresh from servitude, a useful, and in some cases, a valuable citizen of Canada? Is it not the fact that he has been allowed to hold property in his own right, and to deal as a rational and a free being with other citizens? What was claimed by the member for South Brant, five years ago, and what is claimed by myself, is that the Indian should be treated as well as the negro. I agree with the Premier that the average Indian on our reserves is as promising material for citizenship as the negro was when he arrived here from the Southern States—nay, more promising material. We know that the Indians have a talent for politics, at all events