

The PRIME MINISTER. Go on.

Mr. BENNETT. I wish to say a few words—

Mr. FOSTER. I gave way to the member for Halifax and the Solicitor General. I have two or three words to say, although the discussion has taken a wide range, and it would almost appear as if there was nothing more to be said on the question. The first point to which I wish to call the attention of the House and the country is the divergence of sentiment and opinion between the members of the Government themselves. I think that has been most marked. I want to ask the Solicitor General now, after the events of the last hour or two have transpired, if he is prepared to rise and reiterate his pledge to the House that they are taking into consideration the remedying of what we consider to be a grievance, that gentlemen who in Nova Scotia now have the Dominion franchise will, if this Act is passed, on the principle on which the Prime Minister declared it must be passed, be disfranchised—if he will stand up now and say he has under consideration a measure for giving those gentlemen their votes. Will the hon. gentleman answer me that question?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. What I understood from the Minister of Finance was that some such measure was in contemplation.

Mr. FOSTER. I have no doubt it was in contemplation, and no doubt until the First Minister placed himself directly in the face of two responsible colleagues, one of whom has charge of the Bill, it was contemplated in good faith that such a measure should be carried out. Will it be carried out now? Will the Solicitor General be as brave as his words were two or three hours ago?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. I do not go back on my words.

Mr. FOSTER. I believe the hon. Solicitor General wanted to do what was honest and right. I want, however, to put to the leader of the House this simple question: What right has he to take away from gentlemen, just as well educated as himself, just as good in every respect as himself, a franchise which they have enjoyed and hold as one of the most precious rights of citizenship? The hon. gentleman, simply to carry out a fantastic theory, which my hon. friend (Mr. McInerney) showed a moment ago has no reason in the constitution and is doubtful on the question of policy, presumed to say that, in order to carry out that pedantic and fantastic fancy or theory, which has no foundation in the constitution, he will ruthlessly take away the right of the franchise from one thousand men in Nova Scotia and two or three thousand in Quebec and in other provinces of the Dominion, any one of whom is in every respect as free as is the

hon. gentleman so far as citizenship is concerned.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. So far as regards Quebec there is no disqualification which does not exist under the Franchise Act.

Mr. FOSTER. I will come to that by-and-by.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. You are at it now.

Mr. FOSTER. I will reach it before I sit now; but I want to carry out my theory. The Solicitor General will not deny that my general assertion was correct, that there are probably thousands of gentlemen of high intelligence and standing in the community to-day have the right to vote for their friends and exercise the right of citizenship in giving that vote in the different provinces of this Dominion; who, if the theory of the Prime Minister is carried out, will from the moment this Bill becomes law be deprived of that right of franchise. Am I right or wrong in that? There is no gentleman in this House who will deny that assertion. In the explanations the Government have attached to their own Bill, there is a list of disqualifications greater than you can find in any Franchise Act in any other Anglo-Saxon country.

Mr. FLINT. They are not disqualified to vote for members of the Dominion Parliament.

Mr. FOSTER. So my hon. friend says, but what are we attempting to pass in this House. We are attempting to pass a Dominion Franchise Act to settle who shall be eligible to vote for Dominion representatives, and the list that is printed here is to inform us who, as far as the provincial lists now go, are disqualified from going upon these lists. Am I right or wrong in that? The Prime Minister says that there shall not be a cross over a "T" or a dot over an "I" different from the local voters' lists.

Mr. RUSSELL. I suppose the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster)—

Mr. FOSTER. Does my hon. friend (Mr. Russell) want to make another little speech?

Mr. RUSSELL. No; only to ask a little question.

Mr. FOSTER. A little question of half an hour long.

Mr. RUSSELL. No, not long at all, and I feel confident that my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) with his long parliamentary experience and great ability will not be so sensitive as the gentleman behind him (Mr. McInerney) with regard to my asking him a question. I want to know if there is anything in the law of Nova Scotia as it stands, which prevents Dominion officials from being put upon the lists? The point the