

adoption of the local franchise, supposing they were to pass the measure in all other particulars, but in that particular they were to say that the Dominion shall have its own franchise which shall be one and the same all over the Dominion—for example, manhood suffrage; in that case the right hon. gentleman could retire gracefully with this measure, and say: I will not submit it, I will not go on with the plebiscite because the Senate has mangled my Franchise Act. This question is not a political question and ought not to be a political question. There are quite as many temperance people in this country who are Conservatives as there are temperance people who are Liberals. The desire on this side of the House is to keep it free from political entanglements and partisanship, and the first step this Government takes is to make a partisan measure and one that a large number of Conservatives must oppose because of the course the Government have taken.

Mr. INGRAM. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) in discussing the lists to be used in the cities and towns where registration is in existence, said that the Act provided that, if a list was in existence for one year previous to the submitting of this plebiscite vote, the Government would prepare the lists themselves. Now, section 8 of the Franchise Bill now before the House provides that when a list is not in existence for 12 months "the Governor in Council may appoint all necessary officers and confer upon them all necessary powers, and in the preparation and revision and bringing into force of such new voters' lists the provisions of the laws of the province regulating the preparation and revision and bringing into force of the provincial voters' lists in such cases shall, as far as possible, be observed and followed." I apprehend that there is nothing in this Act which compels a province to pay for the revision of this list to be used in the plebiscite vote. On the other hand, I see no provision in the Act to compel this Government to pay for it. Surely you could not compel the province to bear this expense.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Clause 7 of this Bill provides that where it is necessary on the part of the Governor in Council to make regulations, they can make the necessary regulations without appealing to the provincial authorities, but they must do it on the same lines as those upon which the provincial authorities can do it.

Mr. INGRAM. That is clause 7 of the Plebiscite Bill which you have just introduced. It provides for payment of costs of that kind.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I think so.

Mr. TAYLOR. Why could not the Government have the vote taken on the municipal lists?

Mr. IVES.

The PRIME MINISTER. Hear, hear; that is not so bad after all.

Mr. TAYLOR. If you want to remove this question from the arena of politics and do the thing fairly, the last municipal list should be the one used. There is no question but that this is going to affect property. There are a certain number of women in municipalities who own property in their own right and have the right to vote. These persons should have the right to vote on this question. To base this law on a Bill that is not yet made law is unfair. But in every province there is a municipal list for the election of municipal councils and if this question were referred to this class of voters it would remove it from politics and would bring out a fair expression of opinion.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

POST OFFICES CLOSED.

Mr. TAYLOR asked,

How many post offices have been closed since the 1st day of July, 1896?

Where the same located?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Mullock). There were 169 post offices closed, 19 of which have been reopened, making in all 150 which have been closed since the 1st of July, 1896. During the same period, 297 post offices have been opened, making a net increase during that period of 147 post offices. The hon. gentleman asks where these offices are located. Now, I must say to the hon. gentleman, if he does not desire me to think I am treating him as he thought I did about Seeley's Bay, does he seriously wish me to proceed and read the list?

Mr. TAYLOR. Not necessarily. Lay it on the Table of the House.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I am willing to lay it on the Table.

Mr. TAYLOR. The hon. Minister volunteered information that was not asked for. I did not ask for the number of new offices opened during the same period.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I was sure the hon. gentleman was thirsting for information, and so I gave it to him.

IMPORTS FROM GREAT BRITAIN AND UNITED STATES.

Mr. WALLACE asked,

What was the amount of the total importations entered for consumption from Great Britain and the United States, respectively, for the six months ending 31st December, 1896, and for the six months ending 31st December, 1897; also, the duties paid by Great Britain and the United States, respectively, for the same periods?

The MINISTER OF CUSTOMS (Mr. Paterson). The total value of goods imported