

with the logic of things and with the best principles of legislation to take the provincial legislation not in the negative, but in the affirmative sense, and to say simply that the Dominion franchise shall be given to every woman who to-day has the right to vote in any province at provincial elections? It seems to me such legislation would be far more in accordance with the fitness of things than what is proposed by my hon. friend, in view especially of some other provisions to which I shall refer later on.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I entirely understand that the United States have a provision in their Constitution that the franchise adopted in the different states is to be used for elections to the federal Congress. We have no such a law in this country. I am not prepared to admit that it is not perfectly competent for this Parliament to create its own franchise law, apart altogether from the provinces. We need not discuss that at the moment. For the present we are proceeding along the lines of provincial legislation. We are guided by that in framing this law. There are certain restrictions in some of the provinces as to race and nationality in respect to men. We are simply providing in this Bill that there shall be precisely the same restrictions in respect to women. That is all. As we have followed the line of provincial legislation with regard to men, we think it proper also to follow the same line when we are giving the franchise to women. There is only one possible anomaly to which it is proper that I should draw the attention of the committee, and it has not been alluded to by my right hon. friend. I think this Bill gives to women a somewhat wider franchise in certain of the provinces than men enjoy at the present time. For example, there are certain difficult and intricate provisions relating to the franchise in my own province. The right is enjoyed by farmers' sons based upon a certain valuation of property. There is also a similar provision in regard to fishermen. These dispositions are not of a character to be made applicable to women, and inasmuch as women have waited a long time for the privilege of exercising their franchise, I do not think it will do any harm if they have a somewhat wider franchise than the men in the province to which I have alluded.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: No, but it may create confusion. In my own province you give to the women universal manhood suffrage.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Womanhood suffrage.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: That is not the law in Quebec, although in most of the provinces they have universal manhood suffrage. Every man has a vote who is twenty-one years of age. In the province of Quebec the franchise is not given as a right, but it is made accessible to everybody. Every man in Quebec is a voter who is a land owner.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Does it depend on a property qualification in Quebec?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I think one qualification is that he must be the owner of land. The lessee of property of a value of \$2 a month in cities is also a voter.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Does it not practically amount to manhood suffrage?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: In practice it does, but it is not claimed as a right. No one has a right to go to the poll and say: "I am 21 years of age and demand a vote." He must show that he is the owner or lessee of land, or that he is a wage-earner getting \$300 a year, or a professor, or a schoolmaster, or something of that kind. But under this provision every woman of 21 years of age will have the right to step into the poll and say that she is entitled to vote. No distinction is made by this Bill as to these qualifications applicable to men. All other considerations are put to one side.

Mr. READ: I draw the attention of the Prime Minister to paragraph (d) of section 1:

—is not disqualified on account of race, blood, etc.

In the province of Prince Edward Island there is a very large Micmac population, and there will be a technical difficulty in regard to giving the wives of Indians the right to vote. The paragraph reads:

(d) is not disqualified on account of race, blood or original nationality to vote at elections for members of the Legislative Assembly of the province in which the constituency is situate in which such female person seeks to vote.

The men have the right to vote in the province, but the women have not. As this paragraph reads, there will be difficulty in regard to the franchise of the wives of these Indians. I want to say in regard to the tribe of Micmacs that they have shown themselves to be the most loyal people in Canada. They have recruited over eleven per