

the Government of the day, if those officers did not make the lists to suit them, could stuff those lists at their own pleasure in their own office, and for the last outrage, if attempted, there was no possible remedy. It has been asserted, and I assert that voters' lists on numerous occasions have been tampered with and names placed on lists in the Government printing office that were not entitled to a place there. I claim that in one polling division in the riding of North Norfolk, twelve names that were struck off by the revising barrister, found their places upon the voters' lists when they were printed at Ottawa. What could we do with a thing of that kind? We were contending against this trinity of political infamies: the Gerrymander Act, the Franchise Act, and an unlimited amount of boodle.

An hon. MEMBER. Oh, shame.

Mr. CHARLTON. Yes, we were, and it was only by the interposition of Providence that we were enabled to shake these men from the hold they had. The idea of a man standing up to-day to defend a franchise law that provides for the making of lists, for the printing of the lists, and for the manipulation of the lists in every respect by the Government that may desire to profit, and will profit, by any improper conduct with regard to the formation of these lists.

Mr. SPROULE. What do you think of the right of the Manitoba Government to make their lists?

Mr. CHARLTON. They have the right to make their own lists, and we have nothing to do with it. Now, one of the reasons assigned in justification of the present law was that it was proper and desirable to copy the English example. England had revising barristers, and it was said that England had a system which it was proper for us to imitate. We were told that the lists prepared in England were prepared for the election of members of Parliament, and that we ought to have such a system in Canada. Well, Sir, when we come to examine the English law, and to contrast the working of that law with the working of the Dominion Electoral Franchise Act, we will find that there are no points of resemblance between the two. The English lists are made by municipal officers, the overseers of the poor. I have here the English statute, 48 Vic., chap. 15. This law has been often amended and the last amendments were made in 1885. The statute, first of all, issues instructions to the clerks of the peace of the various counties, and, following the instructions to the clerks of the peace are the forms and the nature of the instructions given by the clerks of the peace to the overseers of the poor. These instructions cover the following subjects—Registration of county voters, general instructions explaining the persons entitled to be regis-

tered, the meaning of the expressions used, and the mode of making out and publishing the lists, the publication and inspection of lists, provision for notices and inquiries, for the publication of the lists of voters and the receiving of claims and of objections by these overseers of the poor, the work of forming the lists, of receiving applications to go upon the list, of receiving protests against being upon the lists; all this work was performed by the overseers of the poor who are municipal officers, and finally, there were the instructions to those overseers of the poor with regard to their attendance upon the revising barristers.

Now, the revising barrister in England was not a creature of the Government. He was not a Government appointee at all. He was appointed by the chief justice; he held his office for one year, and his functions with regard to the lists were purely and exclusively judicial. He supervised the work of the municipal officers, and upon appeals from their action he gave his decision. This English law was identical almost with the law of Ontario. The township councils there, corresponding in their functions to the overseers of the poor, made the list from the assessment rolls, held courts of revision, hear claims to be put on, hear protests against being on, and having made a perfect list, so far as their functions will permit them to do, the county judge, whose duties correspond with those of the revising barrister in England, is called in to revise their work upon appeals from their decision. I repeat, that we have in the province of Ontario a system with regard to the preparation of the voters' list almost identical with that that prevails in England. Nothing could be more widely divergent from the system prevailing in Great Britain than the Electoral Franchise law of this Dominion.

Mr. SPROULE. What does the hon. gentleman (Mr. Charlton) think about the registration system in cities and towns of Ontario, which is done under appointees of the Government?

Mr. CHARLTON. Well, Sir, I think that in regard to registration, in regard to any course that can be taken for securing the privilege of the franchise at the very earliest day to young men who come of age, is a movement to be approved of. Anything that will avoid such a scandalous condition of things as we had in 1891 when we held an election upon a voters' list two years old, anything that will prevent such a scandalous condition of things as existed in 1896, when we held an election on voters' lists two years old, is a welcome improvement. In neither of these elections could any voter in the Dominion of Canada under twenty-three years of age exercise the franchise. Almost anything that is imaginable is preferable to such an outrage upon the electorate as was perpetrated in these two elec-