

divided on the lines of confederate and anti-confederate, and many men who formed part of the anti-confederates then, and who, presumably, approved of that Act, afterwards became included in the Conservative party of Canada. That Act was the outcome of party lines existing at the time of the union, when we did not call ourselves Liberals and Conservatives. I do not wish to go at any length into these matters, but I may say that that Act was introduced simply because it was the avowed policy of the Dominion Government to interfere in the provincial affairs.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No, the very reverse.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. In the very events connected with the passing of that disfranchising Act, there were interferences by the Dominion Government with the rights and liberties of the Nova Scotia legislature which were open to the gravest objection. I do not wish, however, to enter into that aspect of the case, but prefer simply to take this ground. So far as that Act could deal with the provincial franchise, what right has this House to discuss it? What care we what a province may do with respect to its provincial franchise? But, hon. gentlemen may say, the provincial lists are those you are taking for the Dominion. That is the case, and if the Dominion lists are interfered with by the provincial authorities, I admit that that would be fair ground of opposition, but there never was a time when the Dominion lists did not contain the names of these Dominion officials. Those officials disfranchised by that local Act were entitled to vote in the Dominion elections. The disqualification which was created by that provincial franchise law of Nova Scotia, does not touch the voters' lists at all.

Mr. MILLS. I never heard any one say to the contrary in this House.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Then, if the names of the Dominion officials have always been on the lists used in the Dominion elections, what is all this fuss about?

Mr. MILLS. Because there was an Act passed disfranchising them from voting, and that is engrafted in this Bill.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. What right has this House to say to any independent legislature of any province how it shall deal with its own provincial franchise, so long as it does not touch the franchise of this House?

Mr. MILLS. It is going to do that?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. It is not, and never did.

Mr. MILLS. But that is the intention now.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. No, there never was any intention of doing that; it did not do it, and will not do it. I want it clearly understood, that, while there were good reasons—which I do not wish to enter into now, because that is a provincial question—for disqualifying the Dominion officials for provincial purposes, that disqualification never touched the voters' lists at all. The voters' lists, from the beginning, contained the names of these Dominion officials who are otherwise qualified under the general conditions of the franchise, and the disqualification only took place when the voter went to the poll. His right to vote then could be challenged, and the oath put to him, which he could not take if he were a Dominion official. I am prepared to defend that Act whenever and wherever necessary, but whether it be wise or not, so long as it does not affect the lists for the Dominion elections, we have no right to complain. Therefore, there never was any ground for complaint as regards the Nova Scotia lists affecting the franchise of the House of Commons, but, if there had been any such disqualification, I want to point out that, years before the Dominion Franchise Act was passed, that difficulty was met. The difficulty was only imaginary, it was never real; but, imaginary as it was, this House legislated on the question and removed the evil, if it ever had any existence, which it had not. Here is the Representation Act of 1892. In chapter 3 of 45 Victoria, the Act relating to the representation of the various electoral districts of the Dominion, I find this provision:

Notwithstanding anything in any law of the province of Nova Scotia or of the Dominion of Canada, no employee on the Intercolonial Railway in that province shall be disqualified to vote as an elector at any future election of a member or members to serve in the House of Commons of Canada, if he shall have the necessary property and other qualifications therefor required by law. In the event of the name of any such elector being an employee on the Intercolonial Railway, having been omitted by the revisers from the list of qualified voters for a member of the General Assembly of Nova Scotia under the laws in force in that province, or to be returned to the county clerks or clerks of the peace, or omitted from the lists of voters deposited by the sheriff with the county clerks or clerks of the peace, or obtained by the returning officer, or furnished to the deputy returning officer, it shall be lawful for such employee to vote as an elector at any future election of a member or members to serve in the House of Commons of Canada, on his taking, or offering to take, before the sheriff or returning officer, the following oath.

Now, Sir, it will be apparent from what I have stated there never was any disqualification on the part of the provincial legislature of Nova Scotia which touched the lists of voters for members of the House of Commons of Canada.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Will my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding) tell me why it was ne-