

benches to-day also recorded their views upon that occasion. I might quote the language of one and all to show what their impression of that legislation was, but I think the words of my hon. friend (Mr. A. K. Maclean) meet the case so completely that further quotations are unnecessary. What were the hon. gentleman's words? They will be found on page 5596 of Hansard of 10th September, 1917:

The Bill before the House proposes to disfranchise arbitrarily a portion of the people of the country. . . . This legislation is objectionable in principle, and I deny that there is anything in the world to justify its introduction or its enactment. . . . A proper regard for the future of this country and for our good name among the nations and peoples of the world compel one to oppose the measure. It is not founded upon any principle of a substantial character. . . . I maintain that history will adjudge the act contemplated by this Bill as a blot upon our National career. And, unfortunately, it comes at a time when we are writing glorious and imperishable pages of our history which will be the future epics of this young nation.

Mark these words, Mr. Speaker.

A proper regard for the future of this country and for our good name among the nations and peoples of the world compel one to oppose the measure. History will adjudge the act contemplated by this Bill as a blot upon our National career.

And yet, Sir, it is to this "blot upon our National career" that the Administration owes its return to power, and it is as beneficiaries of this "blot upon our National career" that hon. gentlemen opposite continue to occupy the Treasury benches and to draw the emoluments and enjoy the dignities, privileges and power attaching thereto. Is it any wonder, Sir, that the people of Canada have lost confidence in this Administration? They never had any confidence. How could they, when the Administration was returned to power through a violation of the most sacred right which belongs to a free people—the right to a just and honest franchise?

But, Sir, if that legislation is to be spoken of as a blot upon our country, what is to be said of that other piece of legislation, the Military Voters' Act, whereby the ballots of soldiers across the seas were so manipulated as to aid in the return of hon. gentlemen opposite? What is to be said of a piece of legislation which, if not so designed—though it would even appear that such was the intention—was at least used as a means not of furthering the will of the people of Canada but of preventing their will being accorded expression. It has been openly stated in this House, and it will not be de-

nied by hon. gentlemen opposite, that as a consequence of that legislation whole bundles of votes of soldiers overseas—votes by bundles—were taken and put into this riding, and into that riding, and into another riding, at the instance of some committee that was in the confidence of the Administration. That was not done at the will of the brave men who were fighting overseas; they did not know, many of them, where their votes were to be recorded.

Mr. ROBERT H. BUTTS (Cape Breton South and Richmond): Oh you!

Hon. Mr. KING: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon, I did not gather the purport of his observation. If the hon. gentleman desires to ask a question I shall be very glad to answer it.

Mr. BUTTS: Y-o-u.

Mr. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Kamouraska): Prohibition would be a good thing here.

Mr. ARCHAMBAULT: His case is a bad one. Perhaps the hon. gentleman is a little dry.

Hon. Mr. KING: The hon. member evidently feels that he is not in a position to make a statement that he would care to have the House listen to. If he wishes to resort to other methods of showing his disapproval of my statements I will not have the slightest objection. I would ask him, however, to show due regard for the dignity and decorum of Parliament.

An hon. MEMBER: Take your medicine.

Hon. Mr. KING: I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that both the principle and the practice under the Act in question to which I have just referred have been defended by one of the members of the Administration openly in this House, and, by their silence, other members have acquiesced in both the principle and practice of taking votes from men overseas and assigning them to different constituencies without the knowledge or consent of voters abroad or electors at home. And what has been the effect of these Acts and these methods of dealing with the people's franchise? The effect is that Parliament has lost altogether its representative character, and in the country the people have ceased to have the faith they should have in our whole system of parliamentary government. Instead of regarding Parliament as the forum in which a nation's rights are to be maintained and its freedom preserved, forums have sprung