

councillors, to the judge of the County Court, the county attorney, and some other county officials. After the lists are issued there is then an opportunity, if any person feels aggrieved, if he has not been properly assessed for him to appeal. That appeal can be held before the county judge. It is well known that almost in every county we have what are known as Division Courts. The county judge comes round quarterly for the purpose of holding these courts, and in our county the appeals are heard after the court is over. In that way our lists are perfect. I hold that the voters' lists in that way, in the Province of Ontario, as produced at the present moment, are as perfect and complete as they possibly can be under any system. I know there are gentlemen in this House who have stated that they are not prepared to accept the assessment roll produced by any Grit assessor, and I was sorry to hear that remark endorsed by the hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Rykert). For my part I have known Conservative assessors whose roll I would be perfectly willing to accept, and I think we have Reform assessors who have more respect for their oath and more respect for their duties than to purposely violate their obligation for the sake of any partisan politician. I admit that there are some men who are very rabid politicians, but I am glad to say that in all cases where the assessors are either Reform or Conservative you do not find them so rabid as to bury their consciences for the time being to serve their political party. But if the hon. gentleman is not willing to accept a Grit assessor, I ask him in common fairness, is it right to ask us to accept an entire host of Conservative assessors? The revising barrister will be even more than an assessor. An assessor has to return his roll, and that has to be investigated and passed by the council; but the revising officer is virtually the assessor for the riding, and his power is absolute. He can put on or take off whom he pleases. If he likes to revalue the property he can do so. He may take the assessment roll as the basis; but if he choose he may merely accept it as a guide to a certain extent in forming his own opinion. Now, I would like to know whether the assessor of a municipality, who goes around for the purpose of valuing property for the purposes of taxation, is not more likely to arrive at a fair and honest value than a man who is going around for political purposes. Every man in the municipality has an interest in seeing that his neighbor's property is fairly and honestly assessed, because the more equitable the assessment is, the more justly and proportionately will the taxes be levied. At present, in most cases, an equitable assessment is made; but the revising officer has a very different purpose in view. He may take information from various parties; but I am inclined to think that he will not be likely to open his ears to suggestions from any Reformer, any more than hon. gentlemen opposite are disposed to listen to suggestions from this side of the House. We have been discussing this Bill for two weeks, and have been making suggestions which we thought were in the interest of justice and fair play; but hon. gentlemen opposite have turned a deaf ear to every one of those suggestions. They have a cast iron law that they want to get passed in its present form, and they will not listen to any remonstrances or advice from us. Even those who held different views on former occasions have found it very convenient to change their views with respect to this measure. They are now in perfect accord with the Government, and are apparently bound to press this Bill through from clause to clause, and to insist that we shall accept it as the law under which we shall go to the country at the next general election. Well, the Conservative party in this country have a record, and I tell you that in years hence, when those who occupy these Chambers are gone, and other men come to take their places, they will look back with feelings of regret and of disrespect at the amount of trickery that we have witnessed

Mr. McMULLEN.

in the halls of this Legislature since 1867, and that it should be continued to be perpetrated from Parliament to Parliament. In not one single year that you have gone to the country since Confederation have you gone honestly. You never would go—

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Order. The hon. gentleman will please address the Chair.

Mr. McMULLEN. I shall do so, Mr. Chairman. I have said that not in one year from 1867 have you ever gone to one political contest to which you have gone honestly. You have always endeavored—

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Order, Order. You will address the Chair, please.

Mr. McMULLEN. I bow to your ruling. I say that all through the political contests that we have had since 1867, you have always had the advantage of us. You have always been in the position to give us—

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Order. The hon. gentleman is out of Order. He will please address the Chair.

Mr. McMULLEN. I was trying to address myself to the question of the franchise, and in order to present the argument that I considered it my duty as a member of this House to present, I have been referring to the elections that have taken place in the past. It is highly desirable that in our elections, at least, we should display that spirit of fair play and true British liberty that we want so much in this House; and while we as politicians may hold different views on public questions, and may fight for those views very keenly here, it is to be admired in either party that when we appeal to the country, we appeal on fair and equal terms, and no one party endeavors to take advantage of the other. I hold that it is desirable that that should be the case, and when one party attempts, by laws enacted under the power that they have vested in themselves, numerically, to place the other party in a disadvantageous position, it reflects discredit on that party; and when we have left the active sphere of political life, such an action will bring discredit on the party that is guilty of it. Now, I was referring to the appeal of the county judge. At present any person who feels aggrieved can give notice to the county judge when he goes around attending to his duties on circuit, and listening to appeals and adjusting them. In that way, I claim we have as perfect a system at present as we can hope to have under this Bill. I hold that to appoint a revising officer in each county, who will have the absolute power to put any names on or to strike any off the list that he chooses, is an unwarrantable and unfair advantage assumed by one political party; and it is not creditable to that party to assume that advantage, because the revising officer will use the power that is placed within his reach in order to serve the party whom he desires to serve. It is better that we should accept matters as we find them, because we are more likely to get a free and untrammelled expression of opinion from the electors under the lists we now have than we could under lists prepared under the operation of the Act. I hold that this right is dear to the people themselves. They are entitled to be permitted to exercise their franchise without being trammelled. Some years ago, when the Attorney General of Ontario passed a license law for the purpose of licensing parties to sell liquors throughout the Province, serious fault was found with that law by hon. gentlemen opposite, because under it he took power to appoint all the license commissioners and all the inspectors. They claimed that the law was used for political purposes, that Conservatives did not receive licenses unless on certain terms, and that the officials who exercised the power vested in them as commissioners and inspectors used it for political purposes. The hon. First Minister of this