

first occasion which presented itself in this House of repealing the Franchise Act, I would vote for its repeal. I purpose keeping that promise. I have never, to my knowledge, made any promise during an election that I did not fulfil after I was elected. I do not wish, by expressing myself in this way, to convey the idea that I approve fully of the Bill now before the House. I can see very many objections to it; but I must declare that it is certainly an improvement upon the Franchise Act, which it proposes to abolish. There are many difficulties in the way of providing a perfect franchise law; but, after all, Mr. Speaker, what is it we should seek for when we are preparing a list of the electors of this Dominion? Is it not that those who are entitled to vote in any constituency in Canada should have their names upon that list? And is there any means more easy or more suitable for finding out who are the real, genuine voters in any municipality than to go to the secretary-treasurer of that municipality? I am quite aware that it is impossible to introduce a Franchise Bill into this House which will meet the requirements of the different provinces of the Dominion. In the province of Quebec, in which I represent a county, if we take the municipal lists, prepared by the secretary-treasurers of the municipalities, we can rely upon it that we have in those lists the names of the good, law-abiding citizens of the county who are entitled to vote by virtue of the property qualification or whatever qualification the law requires. Now, it does occur to me, that, in constituting this House of Commons, we should see to it that the people who are sent here shall be sent by the bona fide electors of Canada, and not by a lot of men who are imported for the purpose of voting. The representatives of the people in this House of Commons ought to be sent here by the men who have the property qualification or whatever qualification may be necessary to entitle them to vote.

I wish to point out another feature of this matter, which is this. The Government of the day have the responsibility of introducing a Franchise Bill. They feel that it is necessary to abolish the existing Franchise Act. I approve of them for doing so, and I shall support them so far. They now introduce a Franchise Bill prepared by the hon. Solicitor General (Mr. Fitzpatrick), which, I think, is, on the whole, a fairly good measure. But there is one serious objection to it. Every member of this House should be careful to see that the Parliament of Canada does not divest itself of the control of the Dominion franchise. Let us avail ourselves of the information we may receive from the secretaries of the different municipalities in the preparation of the lists; but let the House of Commons of Canada, by some means, control the preparation of that list. I think that ought to be done, and I

Mr. POUPORE.

think it can be done; and when this House resolves itself into committee to discuss the different clauses of the Bill, I hope we may be able to induce the hon. Solicitor General to insert some clause that will reserve to the Commons of Canada that power which belongs to it. As regards the different clauses of the Bill, I may say that I know very little about them.

Mr. BENNETT. That is true.

Mr. POUPORE. I must confess that the hon. member for East Simcoe (Mr. Bennett) is right, for once.

Mr. BENNETT. I am sure you do, or you would not approve of it.

Mr. POUPORE. I view this measure as one which should not be considered a partisan measure. I look upon it as a measure introduced by the Government of the day, which is alone responsible to Canada for the introduction of the Bill. It is our function and our right to amend and criticise it, but I think that criticism should not go to the extent of party criticism. I think we should assist the Government of the day in preparing such a Bill as will afford the honest elector to record his vote when an election comes round by the easiest and cheapest means, and I know of no means so inexpensive and so easy for securing a proper list of the electors, as to take the list prepared by the municipal secretary of every municipality for the purpose of the municipal government of that municipality. In that way you get, not the bogus voter, but the solid, responsible citizen of the country, to express his opinion when election day comes round. The consequence is, that you have elected to this House, not a party man, but a man who represents the intelligence of the county from which he comes. Unfortunately, I must say, I have observed, since I have had the honour of a seat in this House, that partyism is brought into the discussion of every question that comes up. I suppose this is one of the things belonging to partyism: but I must say, that I am not sufficiently partisan to look upon every question that is brought up with the eyes of a partisan. I feel that it is my duty to consider a measure upon its merits; and, if the measure deserves my support, my party ties must disappear. I feel that I have a duty to perform to my county and also to the country I live in. With regard to this Franchise Bill, I do not know how it affects the province of Ontario; but, speaking from what I know of my native province of Quebec, I do not think you can find half a dozen intelligent electors in any county who will say that they approve of the present Franchise Act. On the contrary, from my experience, and with all the means I have had of informing myself on the subject, I can say that the unanimous desire is that the Dominion Franchise Act should be abolished. The late Sir John Thompson, some years