

Dominion—willing to let it go without discussion. This Bill would have been introduced, passed its second and third reading, without one minute more of discussion than the eight and a-half minutes given to it by the Premier, so far as hon. gentlemen opposite were concerned. Mr. Speaker, in listening to this discussion I have taken my stand firmly to continue the provincial franchise instead of adopting a Dominion franchise, because I believe that the Provincial Legislatures are better qualified to decide as to the franchise that shall send representatives to this Parliament from the Provinces than the sixteen men who represent New Brunswick in this House, particularly when they are divided in this Parliament on this question. Has there been any difficulty arising under the present system? No hon. gentleman who has spoken has undertaken to say that the present system is not constitutional, and if it has worked well for eighteen years why should it be changed? Why should it be changed without any complaints from any Province, from any party, from any constituency, or from any individual in the Dominion? Nothing of the kind has occurred. Then, if no difficulty has arisen under this system, why insist upon introducing this measure at this time? Of course, I believe it is quite constitutional to do so, but where is the reason for it? While I do not attribute motives to hon. gentlemen, I cannot resist the impression that the passing of this Bill satisfies the Government and their supporters that they will secure a party advantage by it. That conclusion forces itself upon my mind, because none of them, no representative from any Province, has intimated that their people was not satisfied with this. I am satisfied that there is not a Province in the Dominion that expected this legislation at present. Why, Mr. Speaker, what right does our present system infringe? Who does it injure? It does not enable the Provinces to send one more or one less member to this Parliament. Who cares upon what franchise any hon. member is sent here to represent their different Provinces? I do not care whether they come here under manhood suffrage; I do not care whether they are elected by Chinese, if any Province wishes to give them the franchise, or Indians, or any body else. It is none of my business. They are sent here by the different constituents of the different Provinces, and that is all we care about. I do not see that any evil has grown out of the system, while I can see that great wrongs will be committed under this Bill; therefore, I hold to that under which we now act. Now, I do not feel that I am as well qualified to vote in reference to this Bill as I should be if I had a year to consider it—the recess which we have before next meeting of Parliament will afford that opportunity. It is possible that my constituents might favor it. There is something that may be said for it. It seems consistent for the Dominion Parliament to have a Dominion franchise. I admit that is one argument that you have. It is quite consistent, quite constitutional, for this Parliament to be elected by the provincial franchises, or by a Dominion franchise, and of the two I prefer the former. My constituents might prefer a different franchise. My constituents may prefer a qualification for voters which this Bill provides—it is possible. I want to know whether they do or not. Surely, on a measure so important as this, I think it would be in the interests of this country, and of all concerned, if the right hon. mover, after having a discussion here on both sides, were to withdraw this Bill and let us have one recess to consider it. It is undoubtedly my intention to vote against it now; I might vote differently if I found that my constituents were in favor of it; but in the absence of an opportunity to consult them, I am bound to act upon my own convictions of what is for the best. I think this measure ought to have been introduced very much earlier in the Session. I think the Government are very much to blame for allowing so long a time to pass without having

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introduced some important measure. I do not say that the measures which have been introduced by the Government are not important, but no measure of general importance, attracting the attention of the whole Dominion, has been introduced before this Bill. It seems to be the policy of the hon. gentlemen in power to submit important measures and pass them, and make them law, and then submit them for the consideration of the people, with one exception—the National Policy. I took occasion some time ago to say that they went to the country upon that policy and they were sustained; but other important matters, such as voting a bonus to the Canadian Pacific Railway and granting a loan of \$25,000,000 to that company for the completion of the road, that was done without being submitted to the people. It is true that the Government afterwards went to the people, but it was after the money had been expended. They go to the country under different circumstances after the money has been granted. The people say: We are opposed to that action, but we cannot help it now. If the other party were now in power it could not be helped, because the money has been expended; and so we might as well have our friends in power. Again, with respect to the loan of \$30,000,000, the Government did not go to the people, although that is a large sum. The people have, in fact, not been consulted on great measures of this kind. The policy of the Government is to introduce measures and pass them, and afterwards submit them to the people, when the evil done cannot be remedied. So it is with respect to this measure; the policy it embodies is not a fair one to the people. I cannot resist the impression that the strongest feature of the policy of the present Administration is a policy to strengthen their own party. Their legislation to a great extent proves this. I thought, when the Gerrymander Bill was proposed, they had done the last act they could do in that line. Hon. gentlemen opposite are, however, exceedingly ingenious in discovering methods by which they can strengthen their party. This measure is even worse than the Gerrymander Act, because the latter only affected Ontario, whereas the Bill now under discussion affects the whole Dominion. Without going into a criticism of the Bill, because it is not my *forte* to do that and this is not the time, I may say that this is a measure which, if they choose to take advantage of it, hon. gentlemen opposite can strengthen their party very materially throughout the whole Dominion. That is quite manifest. I should have thought that a Government claiming to have the confidence of a large majority of the people, and possessing a large majority in Parliament, could afford to be generous. If I were expressing my opinion outside of Parliament, I would say that this is a very cowardly and unmanly act, to take power into the hands of Government to fix the voters' lists and revise those lists by a person whom they may appoint. They may say: We are not going to do anything wrong; but the very fact that the Government are going to take the power by legislation to do an act, gives evidence that they intend to use that power. I believe hon. gentlemen opposite know it can be used to their advantage at the polls. There are many hon. gentlemen on that side of the House who would not take a mean advantage of anyone, in their individual and personal capacity, who will yet, it seems, advocate a measure which will give them undue advantage over their opponents. I am surprised they should lay themselves open to this charge. I know and respect many of those hon. gentlemen, and I know in private matters they would not take a dishonorable advantage, and yet an advantage of that kind will be taken by the present Bill, which will be the means of strengthening their party. I do not know about a Government being weak or strong in the future. When elections come, I make the best effort I can to obtain a majority, honestly and fairly. During thirty years I have never