

tries into the Dominion to-day cannot, under the law, vote in federal elections, at least in certain of the provinces of Canada. Is it the intention of hon. gentlemen opposite now to be logical in their position and to admit to the franchise those people from oriental countries who are citizens of this Dominion, citizens of the Empire and of Canada, under the new Naturalization Act? Is it their intention to admit them to the federal suffrage?

Mr. JACOBS: You are sidestepping the question.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Are you thinking of sidestepping already? If the attitude of mind being reflected now has any basis of reason at all, it has this basis, that citizenship means suffrage and that there shall be no distinction of races or of sexes. Is the hon. gentleman prepared to say that he will stand in this House and vote for that?

Mr. JACOBS: Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Mr. MEIGHEN: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof";—again indications come, first here and then there, that hon. gentlemen opposite are not prepared to accept the consequences of their position at all.

Mr. CARROLL: Does the right hon. member say that the Chinese inhabitants, the orientals, are not allowed to vote now?

Mr. MEIGHEN: I said, in certain provinces of the Dominion under the federal law to-day—the law which the hon. gentleman wants amended—citizens of Canada who are orientals by birth cannot vote.

Mr. CARROLL: That is federal?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes. In that respect the federal law follows the provincial franchise; and the provincial franchise, mark you, is the franchise of governments controlled by the Liberal party. Let them carry the fiery cross and preach this doctrine of equality in British Columbia, yes, and elsewhere in western Canada, and then we shall find how sincere they are in trying to impress upon the House the inconsistency and autocracy of hon. gentlemen in this corner of the Chamber. No! We were not moved by any anxiety to discriminate against anybody at all, save to the extent that discrimination and care have always throughout the history of our country been considered necessary, in the case of men, in connection with the

franchise. I was one of the members of the Government that admitted the women to the franchise, and that against the Opposition of some hon. gentlemen who sit right opposite us now, some of whom, even in the late contest, denounced that Government for having granted the women the franchise. One hon. gentleman among them, a distinguished member, denounced the late government for their women suffrage legislation because he said it admitted bad women to just the same status as good women. Was there any distinction and discrimination there? We admitted women to the franchise, and the admission was wide and sweeping. Herein is the only restriction. And that restriction was not invented by ourselves; it could be overcome by the woman herself, if she were qualified to do so, by going before a judge and getting a certificate. It is an admission to the franchise the same as applied to men historically in this Dominion.

Mr. MARTELL: Do I understand my right hon. friend to say that his Government was the first to admit women to the franchise in Canada?

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. member may have understood me to say so, but I never used the word "first." We were the first in the history of the Dominion.

Mr. MARTELL: But in Nova Scotia we admitted women to the franchise on an equality with men long before the Dominion franchise was extended to women.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That may be. I do not know about the province of Nova Scotia; but I do know this, that the hon. gentleman has quite a number of colleagues around him who sought votes, and no doubt got them, by denouncing us for admitting women to the franchise.

Now then, I repeat, that we felt we had limited this safeguard to the narrowest limitation possible, and that instead of discriminating against women in favour of men, or discriminating against any class of women in favour of any class of men, it went as nearly as you can go by legislation to put them on an effective equality in consideration of the fact that with respect to admission to citizenship they were not on an equality at all.

Mr. A. R. McMASTER (Brome): Mr. Speaker, I may be allowed perhaps to bring back the debate from wandering into British Columbia and the Orient to a consider-