

We, the undersigned revisers duly appointed for revisal, section....., No....., in the county of, do hereby solemnly swear that we will well and faithfully discharge the duties assigned to us without favour or partiality, that we will place no name on the list of registry, and will strike no name off the same, unless we shall be satisfied that the same, by the law under which we have been appointed as revisers, should be placed on or struck off the same, and that we will in all respects conform to the said law, to the best of our judgment and ability.

The hon. member for Inverness stated that it was ridiculous to expect the revisers to know who held a Dominion office within the limits of the section in which they were appointed to revise the lists, and yet this is the affidavit which was taken by those revisers. Now, there is another point. It is impossible to have any such thing as a universal system for the making of those lists, even under the Act, when we have, as we do in Nova Scotia, 200 or 300 different revisers revising the lists to be used at elections for provincial and municipal purposes. I feel that I would be perfectly safe in saying that, under the machinery with which these revisers are appointed, not one out of every three of those revisers are competent to interpret the Act. The machinery by which their appointment is made, is this: Under the existing circumstances we have municipalities, we have the different districts of the municipalities represented by councillors, each councillor nominates the revisers in his own part of the municipality, and the result is that in a great many cases a number of those who are appointed to revise the lists are incapable of interpreting the statute. Consequently, our lists are imperfect, our lists are not made in conformity with the statute, and so imperfect are our lists looked upon that year after year it is the custom of the legislature of Nova Scotia to pass an Act legalizing the voters' lists for the province, notwithstanding any irregularity or anything that is at variance with the statute. I believe that has been the invariable custom, and continues to the present day. On account of the errors and irregularities, and want of conformity with the law in making up those lists, it was always considered necessary to pass an Act in the Parliament of Nova Scotia legalizing those lists, otherwise they could not be used. Yet those are the lists that we are called upon by the measure now before the House to adopt as a basis for the franchise for the election of members to this House. There are other influences brought to bear in the preparation of these lists and in their revision. There are local influences, there are political influences, and all these influences tend to make an imperfect list and one altogether unsuited to the requirements of the election of members to this House. The

Mr. McDougall.

hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Russell) told the House that the lists were only revised every two or three years, by the local revisers. The lists are revised annually, every winter.

Mr. RUSSELL. I rise merely to call attention to a single point.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Will my hon. friend allow me to call attention for a moment to the statement made by the leader of the House, in which I think we all agree, that we are dealing with a question of vast moment, one that requires to be dealt with in a calm and judicious spirit; and in dealing with a question of this importance we have reached an hour that is not calculated to enable us to deal with it in that calm and collected manner which is desirable, and I suggest to the hon. leader of the House, especially with a view to prevent so great a calamity as that the leader may not be able to be with us, that he should consent to an adjournment. There is this amendment before the Chair with respect to the Indians, an amendment to which I am prepared to give my hearty support; but when that amendment is disposed of there will be another amendment moved, dealing with the question from the standpoint of the general discussion that has taken place to-night, the question dealt with by the hon. member for Yarmouth (Mr. Flint). I hope that hon. member, who followed on the lines of the hon. Solicitor General, will receive the support of the First Minister in regard to removing any disqualification with respect to officials that may exist in the franchise laws of the different provinces. Why I rose particularly, however, was for the purpose of suggesting that while we should like to hear the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Russell), we have reached an hour when the Prime Minister would be consulting the convenience of the House if he would adjourn the debate.

The PRIME MINISTER. I may say for my part that I shall always be willing to consider any amendment which may be offered from the other side with a view to the improvement of this Bill. I do not say that this Bill is perfect and should not be subject to amendment. At the same time I wish to say to the hon. gentleman, who asks the House to adjourn at twelve o'clock, that we have not made the slightest progress.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. We have done a great deal.

The PRIME MINISTER. There is no tangible shape in which we can see it to-day. If the hon. gentleman will tell me that we will make a reasonable progress to-morrow, pass the Bill through committee to-morrow, I have no objection to adjourning at the present moment.