

these men will sit down content under such a stigma. Hon. gentlemen might have learned a lesson from the representatives of that island in the other House. The member for Queen's was willing to take all he could from the Government, but still desiring to get something better he deserted his party and voted with the opposition on the amendment moved by the hon. member from King's county. For this I give him all praise: he acted like an honorable son of the soil as all these gentlemen did. There are men here like myself who have lived their lives there and reared their families on the island and feel very much in the same way. We do not want to see any man there deprived of any right he enjoyed, and which he hoped and believed he would transmit along with his property to his sons and relations. I claim, therefore, that those concessions, so called, although they involve a breach of the uniform principle, are very inadequate concessions to the people of Prince Edward Island, with which they are not at all likely to be contented. I intend, on the third reading of this Bill, to move an amendment as nearly as possible identical with that which was moved in the other House of Parliament, and supported by all the island members, without reference to party, and I shall claim of this hon. House that they shall do on the third reading of this Bill what the Senate did some ten years ago, when they saved the franchise of Prince Edward Island from only temporary destruction: this is permanent destruction. We do not know the hour or day that the danger we once incurred shall be permanent. This is a far greater danger, but be it great or small what I say is this, that it is the duty of all members of Parliament, and all patriotic men to watch and guard their political rights and privileges with the greatest care and caution. Let me, while I am on this subject, refer to a few illustrations from English history. Looking at the pages of Sir Thomas Erskine May, I have read with the greatest interest what he has said of the origin of English liberties. I wish my treacherous memory would enable me to give those sentences without reference to the paper before me, but I am obliged to confess that my memory is not perhaps what it has been in former years: so, perhaps the

House will pardon me while I read a few sentences from the pages of Sir Thomas Erskine May. He says:—

“That Englishmen have been qualified for the enjoyment of political freedom, is mainly due to those ancient local institutions by which they have been trained to self government.”

“The affairs of the people have been administered, not in Parliament only, but in the vestry, in the town council, the board meeting, and the Court of Quarter Sessions. England alone, among the nations of the earth, has maintained for centuries a constitutional polity; and her liberties may be ascribed, above all things to her free local institutions!”

“Since the days of their Saxon ancestors, her sons have learned at their own gates, the duties and responsibilities of citizens.”

“Associating, for the common good, they have become exercised in public affairs.”

“Thousands of small communities have enjoyed the privileges of self government, taxing themselves, through their representatives for local objects; meeting for discussion and business, and animated by local rivalries and ambitions.”

These are the terms in which Sir Thomas Erskine May speaks of the origin of British freedom, and just so long as this freedom was carefully watched and guarded and preserved, just so long it remained intact: but when the time came that wealth and business and other causes led men to delegate to others the powers which their forefathers had exercised in person, these liberties came to be less carefully watched than they ought to have been and the consequence was—as we have most of us read in our histories—that this boasted municipal freedom which was the nurse and guardian of English liberty had disappeared almost entirely, and had become a nest of corruption in the days of the Stuarts and further along indeed up to our own time. Those municipal institutions which in early Saxon times had been the seats of liberty had in our times become the seats of corruption. And how did this come about? Simply by relaxing this watchfulness which if it had been preserved would have saved those institutions from ruin. I ask hon. gentlemen is not this a lesson for ourselves if we admit for a moment that these municipal privileges of ours, these noble enfranchisements should be interfered with by a Government measure of this kind, but can we say we are content to allow the Government to establish a court for the registration of