

ish North America, we should control our own franchise, establish exactly how it should be exercised, and not relinquish that franchise to the provinces, thus producing conditions of inequality, as we are now doing by this Bill. I, therefore, Sir, beg to move my amendment.

Mr. HAGGART. I did not clearly understand the answer given by the hon. the Solicitor General in answer to the hon. member from Cape Breton (Mr. McDougall). Clause "a" of section 5 of this Bill says:

(a) The qualifications necessary to entitle any person to vote thereat shall be those established by the laws of that province as necessary to entitle such person to vote in the same part of the province at a provincial election.

Now, my hon. friend (Mr. McDougall) drew the attention of the Solicitor General to clause 41 of the British North America Act which provides for the using of the provincial franchises for a certain period, and then the establishment of a Dominion franchise. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Fitzpatrick) answered that we were adopting a Dominion franchise by this Bill. I could understand that contention if he were adopting the existing provincial franchises for the Dominion Parliament, but he goes a great deal further than that, and I want to know his authority for it. He does not make the existing provincial franchises permanent for this Dominion, but he delegates the power to the provincial legislatures to alter our Dominion franchise from time to time. I want to know if the law officers of the Crown are of opinion that this can be done.

Mr. BELCOURT. I do not rise for the purpose of making a speech, but simply to call the attention of the committee to what I consider a very recent and a very striking endorsement of the principles for which members on this side of the House are contending. I find that in the draft Bill of the constitution for the federation of the Australian colonies, the very principle which was propounded yesterday by the right hon. the Prime Minister, has been approved of. In the report of the proceedings of the conference held for the purpose of determining a constitution for the federated Australian colonies, there is the consecration of the principle for which members on this side of the House are contending. Section 25 of the draft Bill of this constitution reads as follows:—

The qualification of electors of members of the House of Representatives shall be in each state that which is prescribed by the law of the state as the qualification for electors of the more numerous house of parliament of the state.

From that we see that it has been left entirely to the various colonies to determine the nature, quality, and extent of the franchise upon which the members of the House of Representatives of the new federation shall be elected. The enactment goes even

further than that, because the effect of it is that for all time to come, the determination of the federal franchise in Australia shall be left entirely to the different colonies. It seems to me that this is a very strong example of the soundness of the theory for which we are contending. Here are a number of colonies enjoying British institutions and which have advanced as much as we have in the way of progress and constitutional government.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No, no.

Mr. BELCOURT. Here are colonies which are known the world over for their advanced ideas, both in political and social matters; people who are known for their disdain for the customs and traditions of the old world, and they adopt a franchise provision similar to that which we on this side of the House are contending for. The Australians are a people with whom we have great similarity in our public life, and it seems to me that if the various statesmen of these colonies in conference assembled, after mature deliberation thought proper to accept a franchise principle such as that, it ought to commend itself strongly in support of the point we on this side are contending for.

Mr. MONK. Is that the law, or is it a proposed law?

Mr. BELCOURT. It is a draft Bill adopted by the representatives of all the Australian colonies at a conference held in 1891.

Mr. MONK. It was merely submitted to the conference.

Mr. BELCOURT. It was adopted by the conference as the draft Bill for the new federation.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I do not agree with the hon. gentleman (Mr. Belcourt) that the Australian colonies have at all reached the position that the Dominion of Canada has reached. They are endeavouring to move in that direction now, and one of the strongest inducements that has operated upon the Australian colonies has been the advanced position that Canada has attained in consequence of her federation. I may say further, that I regret extremely that the Australian colonies have decided to adopt the form of constitution indicated by the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Belcourt.) I regret it for the reason that, in my judgment, had the Australian colonies occupied the same position as Canada; had they had the great republic of the United States of America alongside of them, where they could see plainly not only the advantages and the benefits of the constitution of the United States, but also the defects of that constitution, I believe the result in the Australian colonies would be the same as it was in the confederation of Canada. The constitution which the Australian colonies propose to adopt in that regard, is of