

state methods by which the registration is carried out. I look upon it as a desirable thing that we should go back to the system of the provincial franchise. I contend that municipal councils and the men elected by the popular vote of the municipality are in a better position to complete the list of voters of the municipality than a judge or a revising barrister. When hon. gentlemen opposite brought in their election Bill in 1884 they proposed to have revising barristers; they would not even take the judges of the land. My hon. friend characterized it as being absurd and tyrannical when it was proposed to disfranchise the mounted police. Perhaps it was from their standpoint, but when they introduced their franchise Bill they proposed to ignore the judges altogether. They would not take a judge to be a revising barrister; the government would hold it in their own power to say who that revising barrister should be. We fought that, and eventually shamed hon. gentlemen opposite out of it. After three days and three nights' discussion of that point they agreed to come down and appoint judges as revising barristers where they were willing to act, and that a revising barrister should not be appointed except in cases where the judge refused to act or where there was no judge to act. I do not think there is any ground at all for the complaint that the hon. member for West York has made, and I heartily congratulate the government upon the introduction of this Bill. I do not think that there is, at this moment, on the statute-books of Canada, an Act that requires amendment in the direction of purifying our election law more than the Election Act, and I hope now, since we have entered upon the duty of putting through the House a law to cover the irregularities that have taken place under the application of the old Act, we will unite in trying to remove all the objectionable features of the old law, and that we will put the law in such a shape that every man who is returned to the House will be returned by an honest ballot of the electorate without corruption or fraud in so far as it is possible to protect the people against corruption and fraud.

Mr. W. H. MONTAGUE (Haldimand). I want to ask the attention of the hon. Solicitor General (Mr. Fitzpatrick) for one moment to a point in the dealing with which he will perhaps find some difficulty, but, which, if not remedied, will work a good deal of hardship under the local franchise law. The object of the franchise in the province of Ontario is to give every citizen, not specially disqualified, a voice at the polls, but in the working out of the Act, that is not done. The hon. gentleman knows that when the voter goes to the poll the test oath may be put to him as to his

residence, and if he is not resident in the constituency where his name is upon the list and where he seeks to vote, he cannot take the oath and consequently cannot vote. What I would suggest to the hon. Solicitor General is that he would look into the question as to whether he cannot produce some clause which will enable a man either to vote in the constituency where he is upon the lists and from which he has removed, or permit him to transfer his franchise to the constituency to which he has removed. I have an instance in the section of the country from which the hon. the Speaker and myself come. A gentleman owning 200 acres of land in my riding was placed upon the local voters' list. He purchased another 200 acres of land in South Wentworth, still holding the 200 acres of land in my constituency. His name was on the list in the constituency of Haldimand and not upon the list, and he has no means of getting it upon the list of the constituency of South Wentworth. When he came to the constituency of Haldimand, to vote in the local elections, he was, of course, unable to take the oath as to residence, and he was refused the right to vote. That surely is not the intention of the Act. The intention is to give every man the right to speak once at the polls as regards public affairs, but to refuse him the right to speak more than once. The instance I have given is only an example of thousands of instances which might be referred to in the province at large. I was proceeding to say that I recognize there is some difficulty in dealing with the point, but, nevertheless, the government will see that it is a point which ought to be dealt with if possible. There is no reason why any man, and especially a man with large property interests, who happens to remove from the riding in which he was placed on the list, should be refused the right to express his opinion on public affairs at the polls. Yet, under the Act as at present operating in Ontario, he might be owner of half the county for which he was then on the list, and if he removed to another county before the election, he has no right to exercise his vote at all. That is a thing which will disfranchise a number of high-class electors, because they are usually high-class men who own property in one riding and then buy property in another riding. I am sure the Solicitor General does not want to disfranchise these men.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. That is the effect under the provincial Act?

Mr. MONTAGUE. Yes, and you are adopting the provincial Act.

Motion agreed to; Bill read the second time, and House resolved itself into committee thereon.