

thinks he is entitled, but to which the Government thinks he is not entitled, he is much more likely to secure their settlement if he is a promoter of the Elections in the interests of the Administration than if he were not. The experience of hon. gentlemen during past years shows that there is an evil in this particular that requires to be remedied, and that this measure does meet the mischief. The hon. gentleman says we are depriving a party of his rights. I do not know that any one would feel very much grieved, who has claims against the Administration, to be deprived of the liberty of contributing any aid to any election other than his own, while that claim remains undisposed of. If the hon. gentleman will permit this clause to remain a part of the Bill, he will not find many petitioners asking that they shall not be restrained in their liberty, and that they be allowed to exercise those rights which he is so anxious to secure to them, by striking out this provision. The hon. gentleman says the Government may hold over a claim indefinitely. I suppose any person who has a valid claim against the Administration can, in almost every instance, have redress by petition of right; and however anxious the Government may be to delay settlement, they cannot prevent him seeking redress in the courts. We have had many instances, during the last ten years, of redress being sought in the Court of Exchequer, and of its being obtained against the views and even the active opposition of the Administration. This is not an unreasonable proposition. There is a real evil requiring redress, and this clause does afford a reasonable remedy for the mischief. I do not suppose it is possible to propose a measure in this House as a redress for some wrong in the conduct of public affairs, to which exception cannot be taken. But the fact that exception may be taken is, after all, no valid objection against such a proposition. The question is, if there is an evil that requires to be redressed, is this a reasonable mode of seeking to redress it? I think there does exist the mischief sought to be remedied, and I believe this is not an unreasonable remedy. Before the hon. gentleman objects to this, he ought to submit to the Committee some mode of redress for the mischief complained of, which will accomplish the same object and be less open to objection than that before the Committee.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I must say that this provision in this clause will be called an Act for the purpose of inducing Governments to be corrupt. The hon. gentleman admits that any other person has a right to spend money in a legitimate way to promote his own election or the election of a friend, or anybody else. Provided his expenditure is within the limit of the law, there is no fault in him. A man who has performed his contract to the public and the Government has a right to take his money; but if there is a dispute between the two, he is to be punished for doing what otherwise would be perfectly correct, for fear that the Government might grant him, if he might be corrupted, some favour. That is like the old plan adopted with the children of our English and Scotch kings, that when a young prince behaved badly they had a boy who was whipped in punishment for the young prince's sins. For fear the Government may be corrupt, this man is to be guilty of a misdemeanour and sent to gaol. But what is to prevent the corrupt Government saying at once to contractors—the hon. gentleman says we all know the Government will be lenient in settling the account—well, if the Government is corrupt enough to be lenient because a man has subscribed to election funds, all the contractor has to do is to go the Government and say: settle my claim at once; this Act is passed, as long as I have to wait for payment, I cannot help you, but just pay me what I want and I will do so. Of course the Government, if it be a corrupt Government, as it must be in order to make out this case, they will settle up the account at once. Then the party will not be

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waiting payment; then he will spend his money and be very grateful for having got such a large sum out of the Government; he will work at the elections; he will come down handsomely, as my hon. friend says. There is no ground or basis for that sentence in the clause; otherwise, personally, I do not object to it.

Mr. CASGRAIN. There is no doubt that there have been and that there are still to-day a number of contractors with large claims pending against the Government for a long period of time. Of course, in many instances, that cannot be helped; but these contractors, in the meantime, are absolutely in the hands of the Government, and being under the influence of the Government they will, in order to get a settlement of their account, in order to get the favour of the Government, befriend the Government, by subscribing in the proper time for the Elections. I can say this from what I have seen, and I know it is the experience of everybody. This clause does not deprive any man of his real rights. A contractor cannot be a member of Parliament under the law as it exists to-day. If this clause were for an unlimited period, I agree that it would be hard; but the period is limited to a certain time—six or twelve months—during which he will be debarred from subscribing. There is another reason which I consider covers the case. Why should that man be at liberty to subscribe at an election at all, when no money is wanted for an election? The hon. member for Montmagny quoted my personal election. I gave every cent in my expenses which I had to expend directly. I was bound in honour and conscience to do it, and I did it; and what did that amount to? It amounted to some \$340 for running that county during more than six weeks. That was all my own expenses and I might have made my expenses heavier. I made them exactly under the law and I do not want any contractor to come forward and help me to pay my election expenses. Where is the member of Parliament to-day who could not carry his own elections for three, or four, or five hundred dollars, especially in the counties? Therefore, I mean to say that it is not needed at all to have recourse to outside subscribers. It is not necessary at all, and, in the few instances in which it might be necessary, a candidate will find a friend to help him rather than go to a contractor. That is what I want to bring to the consideration of the House, and I am sure this is the true principle upon which we ought to be guided in conducting our own elections. That is the reason why I bring this measure forward, and I hope it will be carried with the intent that I have in view—that is to say, to make it effective before the country.

Mr. CARON. Occasionally we hear a good deal about Provincial rights. Now, there is a point in the Bill of the hon. member which I consider to be of very great importance. I can easily understand that we should have jurisdiction to enact a Bill for the purposes of our own Federal Elections—

Mr. CASGRAIN. If the hon. member will allow me, we will discuss that question.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order.

Mr. CARON. But how, in a Bill framed by an hon. member in this House of Parliament, he could put in such a clause as to provide that whosoever, for the purpose of assisting in any election for the Parliament of Canada, or the Legislature of any of the Provinces of Canada—

Mr. CASGRAIN. Will you allow me?

Mr. CARON. I can understand that the hon. gentleman's zeal should display itself in regard to elections affecting the Parliament of Canada, but I am afraid he is over-stepping the mark, and, in his zeal to make our elections absolutely pure, he is going beyond the jurisdiction of