

for East Huron (Mr. McMillan) to represent them; but they will try to elect some party hack who will do their work in the council, and that will be the cause of the degeneration of our municipal councils. This is a danger which we cannot afford to incur. We ought to oppose any law that would have that tendency. Apart from all these reasons for opposing this Bill, my greatest reason is that which was expressed by the hon. member for East York (Mr. Maclean), because it proposes to hand over to the provincial government the right to say who shall be the electors who will send men to this Parliament. We have a responsible Government, and we ought to have responsible parliamentarians; and if the local governments say who shall be the electors, we need not be in the truest sense responsible to them. We ought to have the franchise of this House under our complete control. The question I presume will come up in committee, and I sincerely hope that the hon. Solicitor General will see that the position he has taken is inimical to the best interests of our country. I believe that it is against the genius of our confederation to place such an Act on the Statute-book, proposing to hand over to an irresponsible body the right to say who shall be the electors who shall vote for the representatives who make this Parliament.

Mr. HENDERSON. The very year that the Franchise Act was put upon our Statute-book, the Liberal party declared that as soon as they came to power they would repeal it, and as they are now in power, the repeal of that law is a foregone conclusion, and, therefore, I am not going to discuss the question whether it should be repealed or not. We are not so much concerned, upon this side, about the repeal of the law as we are about what shall take its place. The hon. Solicitor General has introduced a Bill substituting the voters' lists in use in the various provinces for the present lists. To be brief, I desire simply to draw his attention to the fact that the voters' lists, although made yearly by the various municipalities, are by no means, in Ontario at least, made perfect every year. The lists, as they come from the municipalities, are not by any means perfect, and no man would care to run an election on such a list. These lists are only revised once in four years, or during the year in which a provincial election takes place. In the other years, the revision is very superficial indeed, and in fact is only a revision for municipal elections and not a revision to perfect the lists for legislative purposes. It would be unfortunate if a Dominion election were sprung upon the country at any time between the various revisions for legislative purposes, and the elections for this House should be held on lists altogether imperfect, not revised, not completed, but simply handed over by the municipal officers. In every instance, such lists are very imperfect indeed,

and for that reason I think, with many other hon. members on this side, that some control should be had by us over the revision of these lists, in order to make them more perfect when we require to use them. It has been said by hon. members on the other side that one of the great objections to the Dominion franchise law is the partisanship of those who are charged with the revising of the lists, but although the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen), a few nights ago, made that charge in a sweeping way, he was still good enough to say that in his country he had no such complaint to make. For my part, living in the adjoining county, I will say that I have had no complaint to make, and I would like to see the hon. member in this House who would rise up and say that in his particular county he has any special complaint to make. My impression has been all along that these general complaints were simply a cry with very little foundation indeed, and that no man was prepared to come down and make a specific charge of partisanship on the part of any revising officer. In my opinion, the revising officers, under the present law, are men who could be trusted a great deal more than the men who make up the provincial lists. Who is it that makes up the provincial lists? It is the assessors. Notwithstanding all that has been said about the assessors in Ontario, I know, from my personal knowledge quite well, that the assessor is selected, not so much on account of his qualification to value property, as on account of his qualification to see just so many of the young men as are politically friendly to him, when he goes around, and to see as few as possible who are politically opposed to him. That is the chief qualification of an assessor in Ontario, namely, to make the best lists in the interest of the party predominate in the municipal council for the time being. I do not make this charge against the Liberals any more than against the Conservative party, because I believe it is true in both cases, but you cannot expect to get an assessment roll, which will at all fairly represent the electorate of the province, and if the lists are made from those rolls, and not specially revised occasionally, so as to make them perfect, a great many men will be left off who are entitled to vote and a great many left on who are not entitled to vote. An hon. gentleman spoke a few minutes ago with reference to the omission of names on the lists under the Dominion franchise law, and of the names of dead men appearing on these lists at election times. Well, men will continue to die from day to day, and we must certainly expect that from the time a list is prepared until used, even if the interval be only one year, a very large number indeed of the names of dead men will be found on it. I remember, on the last occasion when revising the lists in my county for a provincial election,