

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES**. The hon. gentleman is confounding two things. I am talking about the justice of taking the provincial franchise as the basis for a Dominion franchise. I am arguing whether it is proper or right to adopt as a basis for a Dominion franchise the franchises of the several provinces. That is a separate and distinct question in itself. Is it right or wrong?

Mr. **WOOD** (Brockville). You propose to make some changes in this Parliament?

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES**. The hon. gentleman says that is wrong. Why? He says it is wrong because in the province of Quebec a man may have five or six votes, whereas in Ontario a man has only one vote. But you have conceded that point already; you have declared that that principle was the only one you would adopt.

Mr. **WOOD** (Brockville). We never declared that. The Bill never came before this House, and never was voted on.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES**. I am not saying it was voted on. But I say that the hon. gentleman's leader used the following language, which has already been quoted by the Solicitor General, but which under the circumstances, I may be pardoned for quoting again. At page 3367 in the "Hansard" of 1894, in reply to Mr. Laurier, Sir John Thompson said:

We propose important changes in the Franchise Act, and, without making a speech upon them or giving reasons, I would briefly state that we propose to adopt, as the basis of the franchise, the franchises of the various franchises of Canada.

That was the proposition. No one cheered more heartily than the hon. member for Brockville (Mr. Wood) on that occasion. He was here supporting Sir John Thompson through thick and thin; that was his own declaration made through the mouth of his leader. He now comes forward and warns us—about what he says: If you attempt to give six votes to a man in the province of Quebec, as you would do if you adopt the Quebec franchise, and only one vote to a man in Ontario, the great province of Ontario will not submit to it. But the hon. gentleman has been asleep for six years; he is, as I have said, a veritable Rip Van Winkle. The hon. gentleman accepted through the mouth of his leader five or six years ago the declaration I have read.

Mr. **WOOD** (Brockville). I never accepted it.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES**. If the hon. gentleman did not accept it, he took mighty good care to hold his tongue, and he took a position in the Government without making any explanation in regard to it.

Mr. **DAVIES**.

Mr. **HUGHES**. I desire to ask a question. Are not the franchises of the provinces the basis of the present list?

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES**. No.

Mr. **HUGHES**. They are.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES**. No. The basis of the present list has been the fiat of the revising officer. Upon this point, and keeping as close as possible to my hon. friend, for I do not want him to escape, I may say that Sir John Thompson introduced a Bill based on the principle which he enunciated in answer to the question put by Mr. Laurier. What did Sir John Thompson say? For I will give my hon. friend the benefit of all the qualifications applied by Sir John in introducing the Bill. He said:

The change is also proposed in this Bill which I indicated a few days ago, that the questions upon which so much difference has arisen in the past as to the basis of the franchise, shall be adjusted by adopting the franchise of the several provinces. While I admit that this is a new departure, I deny what has been so widely asserted, that it is in any important or practical degree a surrender of any principle that we have contended for in times past. The number of differences which exist between the provincial franchise and the Dominion franchise as established by our own Act, are so few as not to be worth the contest and the expense which are involved in keeping them up, and the adoption of a general system which will apply both to the local and Dominion legislatures, has recommendations as regards simplicity and facilities for economy, which cannot exist under a dual system, such as we have been keeping up for the past few years.

Can anything be more clear? The only thing Sir John Thompson claimed to retain was the right to administer those franchises through Dominion officers; but the principle that the franchises of the provinces should constitute the franchise of the Dominion was unreservedly enunciated and unreservedly accepted. So I say, Mr. Speaker, that I was more than surprised, after we had heard this and for years had heard no repudiation of it, to find that this Bill, based upon the very principle they accepted, and on which Sir John Thompson announced his desire to frame a measure is called a contentious Bill to which they cannot agree. I can understand that if an hon. gentleman took up the position adopted by Sir John Thompson, namely, that Dominion officers should be appointed to make up separate lists from the provincial franchises, then he would have a point. Whether we should incur that expense or not is a point I am willing to debate. If the hon. gentleman thinks it worth while to have two sets of revising officers, two sets of lists based on one franchise, involving a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars for their revision, we are prepared to discuss the matter, grapple with it and take issue on it. But do not let my hon.