

advanced beyond that stage in which he depicted them, but that they are sufficiently advanced to take their places alongside the white man and decide at the polls who shall govern the country. The hon. gentleman speaks of the education of the Indians, but I tell him that so far as the Indians in the Maritime Provinces are concerned—those of them that I know—this picture is very much overdrawn. I have been amongst those Indians, I have fished, and hunted and talked with them, and spent a good deal of time in their company, and to tell me that these Indians are at all educated, that they are a reading people or that they have the slightest idea of what government is, is an insult to the intelligence of any man who knows anything about them. They do not read the newspapers, they cannot read, and they have the crudest ideas of what Parliament is; they know or care little about it so long as they get the money and stores from the Indian agent. Beyond that they know nothing; and as for telling me that these people, while they are wards of the Government, should have a right to overcome the votes of white men—of farmers and mechanics—I say it is monstrous. The hon. gentleman went on to speak of the Indians of Ontario. Well, all I can say is, unless all those who have spoken of them bear false testimony, the condition of the Indians is very much overdrawn. I am told that not more than one in fifty can read, and that newspapers hardly circulate among them. The hon. gentleman has gone very much further than the motion put into your hands by the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell), in the direction of manhood suffrage, when he says that the uneducated Indian, with \$150 worth of land, though unable to exercise it intelligently, should have the franchise. If he has it, surely the white man, if educated and intelligent, even though he does not possess \$150 worth of land, should have it. I say the hon. gentleman has laid down a wrong basis for his franchise. I say that the possession of \$150 worth of land is not the proper principle on which to confer upon a man the right to vote. To confer it upon an unenfranchised Indian because he has \$150 worth of land, which he cannot sell, is going further than any civilised country has ever gone before, and I say it is an outrage and a shame. I say it is taking from those who ought to have the right the right they now have; it is putting up an Indian to override the white man. And with what argument does the hon. gentleman recommend this proposition? Why does he ask the House to swallow it. If he says, the Indian is a spendthrift and spends his money, did not Charles James Fox do the same? The brilliant statesman and orator, the first man of his day, is compared to the untutored savage, in a state of tutelage to the Superintendent General. I regret very much that the hon. gentleman thought proper to recommend this Bill to the committee, by bringing into comparison with the untutored savage a man like Charles James Fox. It is nonsense, perfect nonsense, and nothing else. I had hoped, after we had heard from the hon. gentleman's own friends behind him, that the proposition as understood by us was an outrage, that the hon. gentleman would have modified it. No one denies the right of the Indian who is free, and who lives as a citizen of the Dominion, to a vote. Give it to him, but draw the line there, and let this proposition to give the vote to the unenfranchised Indian, who lives in his tribal relations and is under control of the Government, be struck out, because it is one of the many blots which cover the Bill of the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. MITCHELL. I have not troubled the House with any remarks in the lengthy discussion which has taken place on this matter, but I have regretted a good deal the time occupied in it, and the delay which has been caused in the public business of the country. While I say that I

am going to speak my mind plainly about this matter, and say what I believe and what I intend to do, I think my hon. friends opposite have been throwing away their powder in drill practise, in place of reserving the many valid objections they have towards the details of the Bill until the right stage arrived, when they could present them, and they have been arguing, in my opinion, in support of a wrong conclusion. Now, in reference to this word Indian, what does this clause amount to? It simply declares that an Indian is a person. My hon. friend from South Brant (Mr. Paterson) and a number of other hon. gentlemen have referred to the education of the Indians and the home creations which they have gathered about them in districts from which they come. Surely my hon. friends will not deny that Indians of that class are persons; and if an Indian is a person, why should we not so declare it in the Bill? I am satisfied, from what hon. gentlemen opposite have said, that there are a class of Indians in this country, from their intelligence, and from their accumulation of wealth and from the taxes they pay, to whom every man would willingly extend the right to exercise the elective franchise; and therefore I think this House should not have occupied five minutes in the discussion of this section, before passing it. So much for that. I may tell the right hon. Premier that I disagree entirely with the views he has expressed in relation to the Indians, so far as the section of country from which I come is concerned, at least. My Province is amongst the oldest Provinces of this Dominion. The early settlement of what was the Province of Nova Scotia, which covered the country from which I come, dates back several centuries, and it may be classed amongst the older Provinces of the Dominion; and I can tell the right hon. gentleman that the descriptions he has given of the Indians of the other Provinces are as far from the actual fact as day is from night; and I can fully endorse the statement made by the hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) that any man who knows the tribal condition of these Indians—the miserable, wretched state in which they exist, their beggary, humiliating and debased condition—I speak of it with regret—and knowing it, could for one moment think of giving that class of people the elective franchise, simply could not have fairly considered what he was attempting to do. Sir, I am speaking my honest convictions, and I intend to do it to the end in this matter. The elective franchise is too sacred to be dealt with by prejudices, by party purposes or by whims, and I do not want to see my right hon. friend have to change places and go to the other side of the House, for I am anxious that he should continue where he is and keep my hon. friends on the other side, where they are, to watch him and endeavor to keep him right. An hon. member says it is a patent that I have. It may be a patent to exercise my free and independent convictions in a case of so much importance as a Franchise Bill. I say it is the duty of every man to speak freely what his convictions are with regard to this subject. I wish to do it honestly and fairly. I have looked over this Bill with some little attention, and as hon. gentlemen know, I have supported the principle of the Bill to this extent, that I believe it to be the duty of the Parliament of Canada, by legislation of its own, to declare who shall be eligible to sit in this House, and on what conditions gentlemen shall sit here. I have supported the Government in that, and I want to support them to the end, if I can consistently and conscientiously, in order that we may put as perfect a Bill as possible on the Statute Book of this country. Now, Sir, I may say in relation to this Bill that there are two elements in it which are very objectionable, to my mind. One is all these fancy franchises that are contained in the second paragraph of the third section right down to the end of it. I would not have one of them; I believe they have not a tendency to extend the liberty of the people; they do not tend to make a more independent Parlia-