

a Dominion legislature, and hand it over to a provincial legislature, which may be hostile or may not be hostile, it makes no difference either way. If they are hostile, it may be used to the disadvantage of the party which is in power; if they are favourable, it may be used to the advantage of the party that is in power; but neither of these things is defensible. It also gives to a power entirely out of our own control the right to say what shall be the polling divisions of the constituencies of gentlemen who sit in this House. Now, if there is one principle that is well established, it is this, that a legislature should have control over its own constituencies, that it should fix the bounds of its own constituencies, that it should be the executive power which carries out its own elections, and that neither of these things should be given to a power outside of itself, one which may be hostile or one which may be favourable, there is no difference in the principle of the thing at all. Now, Sir, to bring into this Parliament a Bill so against the genius of our federal institutions a retrograde motion, so far as the growing community and progress of this country, from a federal point of view, is concerned, is bad enough; but to bring it in and pass it under local conditions now existing, which put the governance of these elections, of the bounds of the constituencies, of the men who vote, entirely into the hands of law-givers over whom we have no control, who may be hostile to us, and whose laws at present existing upon the Statute-book are not to the credit of the provinces, nor are they for the purity of elections or the straightforward and honest declarations of the will of the electors—it is on these grounds, I say, that this Bill is a contentious Bill. If my hon. friend expects that Bill to pass in a few days, he is quite mistaken. Every line of that Bill will have to be fully and exhaustively discussed, every line of that Bill will be fought by Her Majesty's loyal Opposition, not in a way merely contentious, but with a view of making it a measure, so far as it possibly can be made, which will give justice to all parties. The Bill as it is presented before the House, does not do so; and if Her Majesty's Opposition can defeat that Bill and substitute a better principle, it is the determination of the Opposition to do so. That makes it a Bill which will require time, and it is utter folly for the Government, who wish to get quickly through with their business, who have business admittedly important that ought to be before the House and that must be passed, to interject between that business and the present time a Bill of this contentious nature, which must be debated lengthily, which must be fought inch by inch, and which this House must criticise first in its principle, and afterwards, if it be defeated on that point, in the details of the Bill to its very last section. I am mak-

Mr. FOSTER.

ing now a plea for taking this Bill out from the consideration of the House until a more important measure has been discussed and has been passed, namely, the tariff measure. My hon. friend who sits beside me, in the way of counsel, asked whether it would not be better that this House should forego consideration of that Bill for this session entirely, inasmuch as there was no present need for it. My resolution is not going so far; it is simply going to say that until the tariff measure is brought down and is disposed of, the House can very well leave aside the discussion of this measure which has been brought before us this afternoon. That is the length to which my resolution will go. More than that, I will state that if the other measures which hon. gentlemen have to pass through, measures which are not of this contentious kind, the Estimates which we must have for the service of the country, if it is necessary for the Government to take some little time to discuss and consider these, we are ready to discuss and consider them with a view to getting them most speedily through this House. But it is different with this Bill: it is different because this Bill is absolutely of no importance at the present time. It is a Bill which goes against what we believe to be absolutely essential to the dignity and the independence of this House: it is a Bill which puts the fortunes of this House as to constituencies, as to constituents, as to polling divisions, as to the administration of the law, entirely in the hands of bodies over which we have no control, and bodies which may be hostile to us; but whether hostile or not, makes no difference in the principle, as I have said before. With these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move:

That all the words after "That" in the original motion be struck out, and the following be added in lieu thereof:—

"The further consideration of this Bill be deferred until the tariff promised by the Government for this session, has been disposed of by this House."

Mr. CAMERON. I have listened with great attention to a three-hours' speech delivered by the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat. Of the three hours of the time of the House taken up by the ex-Finance Minister, five minutes exactly were devoted to the principles of the Franchise Bill; all the rest of the hon. gentleman's speech was extraneous to and entirely beside the matter now before the House. I have said that I listened with considerable attention to the hon. gentleman's speech: but had I known the line of argument the hon. gentleman was going to pursue, I must confess that I would not have paid the same attention to it, because to my certain knowledge, two-thirds of it I have heard three times in the House during this present session, either from himself or from the gallant baronet who sits beside him. Now, three times in one session, and in speeches