

British Columbia, for instance, an alien is disqualified on account of race, blood, or original nationality from voting in the province, she cannot vote in a Dominion election. If, on the other hand, in the neighbouring province there is no such prohibition, then she is allowed to vote in the Dominion election. I think that is the proper interpretation of the law. This provision was put in the negative. That is to say, we adopt the provincial legislation in the negative.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: In order to make the matter perfectly clear, permit me to say that we are merely carrying out in this respect, the same principles with regard to women which now prevail in regard to men.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I do not intend to discuss the principle of the Bill on the present occasion, but will reserve any remarks I may have to make on that subject. But the policy the Liberals have always advocated since the time of Mr. Blake, when we had the Franchise Bill, which was discussed at great length, was that we should adopt provincial legislation in the matter of the franchise. It has, I think, been contended by authors who have written on the subject that the franchise is largely a matter of education and tradition, and therefore, wherever there is a revision of legislative power, it has always been suggested that the proper body to legislate upon the franchise should not be the central Government, or the central power, but the local legislature. It is a specific provision of the constitution of the United States that the power to legislate upon the franchise is vested in the State. Congress has no power to legislate upon the franchise, and in every federal election, whether it be for the presidency or for Congress, is taken upon the franchise of the state. Today in the American Union there are states in which women vote for the presidency and states in which they do not. The reason for this legislation is that the franchise, as I said a moment ago, is largely a matter of education and tradition. There are communities which are more educated and more advanced, you may say, in the line of franchises than other communities. Take, for instance, the two nations which are today at the head of civilization in Europe. The franchise has just been granted in England to women, after a period of long education. I am satisfied that although France is supposed to be a democracy far more advanced than England, the reason

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier.]

why the franchise has not been given to the women in the country, is that in France education and tradition have not favoured that course. In my humble judgment, the Act would have been more useful if we had followed the policy of leaving the question of the franchise to be determined by the provinces. At present there are five provinces which have given the franchise to women. Those provinces are the five provinces west of the Ottawa river. According to my interpretation of our own law, the women of Ontario, of Manitoba, of Saskatchewan, of Alberta and of British Columbia have the right to take part in Dominion elections. Our law upon this subject is contained in chapter 6 of the Revised Statutes, section 10, as follows:—

The qualifications necessary to entitle any person to vote at a Dominion election in any province shall, except as herein otherwise provided, be those established by the laws of that province as necessary to entitle such person to vote in the same part of the province at a provincial election.

This language seems to me very clear and it seems to convey the right of the franchise in Dominion elections in all the provinces where it has been given to women. We had a discussion, as my right hon. friend will remember, last session upon this subject, and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Doherty) took the ground that the law did not apply because of some distinction as to the word "person" which is derived from the interpretation given by British jurisprudence. My hon. friend, however, has taken the view that the franchise should be extended to women in all the provinces, regardless of the fact that some provinces are sufficiently advanced to give the franchise to women and others have not done so. Five provinces have done so. A sixth will do it this year, because Nova Scotia will have such a law. Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Quebec have not yet reached that stage, but they will endeavour, I have no doubt, to fall in line at no distant date. My hon. friend, however, instead of taking the provincial franchises in the affirmative, and saying that the law of the province shall apply to every woman in every province when she has the franchise by the law of the province, has provided that when any woman is denied in any province the franchise by the legislature of the province, she will not be able to vote at a Dominion election. However, they may be on a parity there, and if she is denied the franchise by a province, she will be denied the franchise under this measure also. Would it not be more in accordance