vision is found in section 41 of the British North America Act, and it reads as follows :—

Until the Parliament of Canada otherwise provides, all laws in force in the several provinces at the union relative to the following matters, or any of them, namely—the qualifications and disqualifications of persons to be elected or to sit or vote as members of the House of Assembly or legislative assembly in the several provinces, the voters at elections of such members, the oaths to be taken by voters, the returning officers, their powers and duties, the proceedings at elections, the periods during which elections may be continued, the trial of controverted elections and proceedings incident thereto, the vacating of members, and the execution of new writs, in case of seats vacated otherwise than by dissolution—shall respectively apply to elections of members to serve in the House of Commons for the same several provinces.

That is, we were to have as our law governing in these cases the law of the respective provinces relating to the election of members to sit in the legislative assembly. We were to have the voters' lists for use in Dominion elections that were to be used in provincial elections. I re-affirm the assertion I have already made, that there never was during the eighteen years that rule was in practice any evidence of the slightest dissatisfaction with it, the slightest evidence of the necessity of change, and the Government were not impelled by any necessity, apparent or real, to carry out the change they made. Now, of course the Government had a motive. The Government had a motive when it naturalized and introduced that American cutthroat piece of political villany called the gerrymander, and so arranged matters in this province of Ontario that one-half of the electors were able to elect two-thirds of the members to sit in this House. The Government had a motive there. The motive was to strengthen themselves ; and they did it. They had a motive when the Electoral Franchise Act was introduced. The motive was not to do justice, not to meet a public want, not to meet a claim on the part of the public for the redress of a grievance, but the motive was to place upon the Statute-book—a law which would give the Government of the day unjust and illegitimate advantage. That was the motive ; and that motive was in the results and fruits that followed fully secured. The Government attempted at first to give to all Indians of the Dominion a vote. They finally abandoned that proposition. They attempted at first to take power to appoint any man who had five years' experience as a barrister, no matter how disreputable he might be, no matter how pliant a tool of political parties he might be, to the position of revising barrister. The long fight the Opposition made prevented some of these attempted outrages. We secured a limitation of the Indian vote to a few tribes, partly civilized. We secured a provision that judges only where available should act as revising barristers. We minimized to some extent the evils that the Bill was intended and calculated to produce, but we never were able to eliminate its chief and most important features for evil.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Did I understand the hon. gentleman to say that the Bill proposed to enfranchise all the Indians; that the Indians of British Columbia, the Indians of Manitoba and the Indians of the North-west Territories were all to be enfranchised ?

Mr. CHARLTON. The hon. gentleman understood me correctly. The Premier of the day, when asked that question, expressly asserted that such was the case—that "Strike-in-the-Back," "Eagle's Nest," "Pie-a-Pot," and all other Indians of the North-west were to be enfranchised. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman was in earnest or indulging in a piece of facetiousness, but that was his answer, and that was the provision of the Bill.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend is not in earnest.

Mr. CHARLTON. I am ; I leave insincerity to the hon. gentleman.

Mr. DAVIN. When was this ?

Mr. CHARLTON. In 1885 ; when my hon. friend's parliamentary existence was yet in embryo. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Bill with these provisions became the law.

Now, what were the practical results connected with the operation of the Bill ? The Government appointed the revising barristers. The revising barristers held office during the pleasure of the Government. They might be honourable men, and in the majority of case they were ; they might in some cases not be as strictly honourable as might be desired. These men had in their hands irresponsible power. They were clothed with power to make the lists, to publish the lists, to use such information as they might deign to us in the preparation of the lists. Their decision could not be challenged except on questions of law, and the right of a man to be on the voters' list is always a question of fact. The preparation of the lists was so expensive that the Government shrank from incurring the expenditure of an annual revision, and we had only four revisions from 1885 to 1896. Those lists upon the occasion of the first revision were printed in the printing offices of newspapers supporting the Government. Then the Government changed the plan ; they bought plant for the Government printing office at Ottawa, and printed the lists in their own office. When that point was reached, we had this most remarkable condition of things existing : we had a law that gave the Government of the day power to appoint its own officers to make the lists ; then we had a further provision by which