

terms in order to give full sway to the revising barrister in construing the law in his own way, and in putting on the lists only those who shall have confidence in the Conservative principles. The hon. First Minister when he proposed that famous Bill, thought that he would give the right of suffrage to a greater number of citizens, but, I believe, that as regards the Province of Quebec, at least, he has completely missed the mark, and it will be the same thing in all the Provinces of the Dominion. Now, will this Bill have the effect of establishing uniform franchise throughout the Dominion? No, Mr. Chairman. In Prince Edward Island nearly one-third of the population would be disfranchised; and so true is this that the hon. First Minister saw fit to cause an amendment to be proposed by the hon. member for King's (Mr. Macdonald), in order that this Bill may not have any effect in Prince Edward Island. But then uniformity is completely destroyed. But if this new law is not in harmony with the provincial institutions of Prince Edward Island, it is not any more in harmony with those of the Province of Quebec. Mr. Chairman, why then should it be forced upon the Province of Quebec. We, also, are satisfied with our provincial franchise. We are satisfied with the manner in which things have been managed in our elections. By what right does the Dominion Parliament assume the power of depriving us from that which is just as dear to us as it may be to Prince Edward Island? Mr. Chairman, the electors of the Province of Quebec are anxious to keep their electoral franchise and I deny to the members from other Provinces in the Dominion the right of forcing upon us a franchise which we reject, and which we do not want any more than the inhabitants of Prince Edward Island. The members from British Columbia would think it very unjust and odious if this Parliament would enfranchise the Chinese of British Columbia; they have protested, and with reason, against the interference of Parliament. Well, the members from British Columbia must do the right thing for us if they wish that we should do the same thing for them. They are perfectly right; I am ready to support them, but only so far as they will do us justice on this question. Well, Mr. Chairman, the Bill introduced by the hon. First Minister is not destined to create uniformity. It cannot realise the primary object for which it has been proposed. Therefore the hon. First Minister has only been following his lifelong dream: the centralisation of the federal power. The introduction of this Bill, if such a legislation is adopted, is an encroachment on provincial rights; it is a step taken towards legislative union. But, as the hon. First Minister is an exceedingly practical man, I am convinced that he had another object in view, which was to injure, as much as possible, our friends from the Province of Ontario, who have Indian reserves in their counties. That hon. gentleman thinks that by forcing the adoption of this Bill, all the gallant champions of the Liberal cause, whose acquaintance I have had the honor to make within a few days, all these brave defenders of the rights of Provinces will find it impossible to be re-elected. I trust, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. First Minister will fail in his attempt, and that at the next election every Liberal member from Ontario will be re-elected to defend the rights of the great Liberal cause.

Mr. McMULLEN. I consider that we have reached a very important point in the discussion of this very important question, and I think it is desirable that we should give it our very serious attention. We have reached that point where it becomes necessary for us to decide whether we will adopt a Dominion franchise, or continue to avail ourselves of the franchise under which we have been operating for years. In the first place I say that the present franchise which was passed in 1874 has been in force some ten years. During that time there has not been any evidence which has come under our notice sufficient to convince us that any

change was necessary. There has been no case of a contested election, in which the man who secured the seat could find serious fault with the franchise under which he secured it. It has worked well, it has been a cheap system, and it has been generally acceptable to all the Provinces. In the face of these facts it is highly proper that we should consider whether it is necessary that we should alter our present system, and inaugurate an expensive and cumbersome system which would prove a very serious drain on the revenue of this country. Hon. gentlemen opposite have stated that it is not desirable that the Provinces should fix the franchise for the Dominion. I am quite prepared to admit that. But we claim they do not fix the franchise for the Dominion, but that at the present time the Dominion largely controls the whole machinery. In the first place the Dominion makes the constituency in all the Provinces. In the next place, the Dominion claims the right to say how many inhabitants shall be in each constituency, and when the number of inhabitants increases or decreases, to readjust that constituency and make it of any shape, or form, or number of inhabitants to suit themselves. The Local Legislatures or the municipal organisations are only permitted to put on the rolls, out of the number living in those constituencies, those who shall be entitled to vote. Now, I cannot see that it is a matter of very great importance to this House whether a certain percentage of increase or decrease of that particular constituency shall or shall not vote, so long as the constituency is permitted by this House to send a member. I think it would make very little difference in the Province of Ontario, for example, under the constituencies as they are formed, whether the ladies in each constituency were permitted to vote or not. It might in some cases, but, after all, the constituency can only return one member. The constituency is composed of municipalities chosen and fixed by the Government in this House, which has the choosing and the fixing with regard to the number of population it shall contain. The only one point which is maintained by the municipality is the enfranchisement of those within the constituency who may vote for municipal purposes. I hold that that is fair, that it is a matter of justice extended to the people themselves, and I hold that the present system of enrolling the people and permitting them to exercise the franchise is a better system, a more prudent and a juster system, than anything which will be inaugurated under the operation of this Bill. Take a minor municipality: it elects a reeve and four councillors. In most cases a municipality is divided into wards. Each man runs for his own ward, and after the elections have taken place an assessor is appointed, who is sworn to go from house to house, assess every property, enrol each man in the municipality for the property he owns, real or personal, to enter upon his roll every young man of the full age of twenty-one years, for the purpose of getting the poll tax. He is sworn to enter every male in every house, and he has to make a return of the list to the municipal clerk. That clerk gets the list, and he has to hang up a copy in several public places for the inspection and investigation of those who choose to examine it. After a certain time has passed the Court of Revision is held. Each member of that council comes from his own particular section, and the roll is gone over from beginning to end. Every member of the council is there, in the interest of his own particular section. He is there to see that his friends are on the roll and to see that every piece of property in the whole municipality is properly and proportionately assessed. The whole roll is carefully investigated, and after it has been subject to the investigation and criticism of those five men, along with the clerk who undoubtedly in most cases is an experienced man, it is finally confirmed. After it is confirmed the voters' lists are printed. As soon as they are printed a certain number are sent to each member of Parliament, to municipal