

citizen, he has simply made a declaration of his intention to become a citizen, and is looking forward to the enjoyment of the rights connected therewith. I do not think that a person going from Canada to the United States, making possibly a declaration of his intention to become an American citizen in order to hold real estate, but not consummating his papers by becoming a citizen, perhaps returning to Canada and never becoming an American citizen, should be prevented from subsequently voting here. We will go far enough in declaring that an individual shall lose his right to vote after he has become an American citizen.

Mr. LANDERKIN. Does the promoter of the Bill intend to bar out any persons who have acquired property in the United States? Some young men may go to that country, may possibly file declarations to become American citizens in order to acquire property, and may subsequently return to Canada. Will this Bill permit such young men to vote or not? This question should be carefully considered, and it should be stated as to whether this Bill will place such men under the ban, and if so, for how many years after the return. There are members in this House who have acquired property in the United States, and I wish to know if this Bill is intended to strike a blow at them. It would be well that the promoter of the Bill should take the House into his confidence and let it be known whether it is intended to meet such cases.

Mr. McMULLEN. I concur in the view expressed by the hon. member for North Grey (Mr. Masson). There are no less than fifteen states in which a man may vote for President if he has declared his intention of becoming a citizen of the United States. I can give the names of the states, if my statement is challenged.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the second time.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON moved :

That Bill No. 5 be referred to a special committee consisting of Messrs. Wood (Brockville), Cameron (Huron), Amyot, Barron, Sir Adolphe Caron, Sir John Thompson, Langelier, Desjardins (L'Islet), Montague, Skinner and McKeen.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL FRANCHISE ACT.

Mr. CHARLTON moved second reading of Bill (No. 31) to amend the Electoral Franchise Act. He said: The Bill I shall call the attention of the House to is one which I trust will commend itself to the Minister of Justice and to the Cabinet. I have introduced this Bill without any desire to make political capital or to make a point against the Government, but simply with a desire to correct an abuse which has existed and which is liable to occur again. The Bill is a brief one and I shall preface my remarks by reading its provision :

" Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:—

"1. Section thirty-nine of 'The Electoral Franchise Act,' chapter five of the Revised Statutes, is hereby repealed and the following substituted therefor:—

"39. If, from any cause, the list of voters for any polling district is not revised and certified at the time when it should, under this Act, be sent to the returning officer at any election, then the last list of voters, revised and certified for such polling district, shall be sent to the returning officer and used at such election; but if such last list is not as recent as the last list of voters prepared under the laws of the province in which such polling dis-

trict is situate, then such last provincial list shall be sent to the returning officer and used at such election."

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have had two revisions of the Dominion list under the Franchise Act since 1885. These revisions are expensive and vexatious. They are vexatious to the members, vexatious to the provinces and to the Dominion at large, and I have no doubt that many members of this House would be pleased if the revision of the lists for the present year is postponed. We had the last general election held upon an old list, and I presume that there was scarcely a young man in the Dominion of Canada under twenty-three years of age who was entitled to a vote. The result was that many thousands of young men who ought to have voted and who were entitled to a vote, were not able to do so in consequence of the delay in the revision of the voters' lists, as the list was practically two years old at the time the election was held. The elections were held upon a list which disfranchised all the young men, which left on the voters' lists thousands of men who were dead and who were in many cases personated; a list which included thousands of men who had removed from the country, because the older the voters' list is the larger the number of people on it who do not live in the country. The consequence of this was that at the last election we had not a fair expression of public opinion. It was estimated that there were fifty thousand young men debarred from voting who had a right to vote, thirty or forty thousand dead men on the list, many of whom were voted for by personators, and tens of thousands of voters who were out of the country, and there was a disposition in some quarters to use improper means to bring these men back. The result of this condition of things was most unfavourable to political morals, and the consequence of it was to secure a verdict which in many cases was not one that would not have been given if the lists contained the names of those actually entitled to vote.

This Bill does not propose that the provincial list shall be substituted for the Dominion lists except in cases such as occurred last election, where the Dominion list was an old one and where manifestly it was unjust to have used this list. This Bill proposes that in such cases, where the provincial list is a more recent one, and if for any cause a revision has not been made under the Dominion Franchise Act, and the Dominion list does not properly represent the electorate of the country, then in such cases the provincial list if more recent, will be substituted for the Dominion list. I think this proposition is a very fair one and if the Government orders a revision of the Dominion lists every year, its provisions are of course inoperative, but if for any reasons, one, or two, or three years should elapse without a revision and there should be a bye-election in the meantime, this election would be held on the provincial list. If, as was the case last year, there should be a general election precipitated on the country and there was an old Dominion list, under the operation of which no one under twenty-three years of age could vote, then it would be in the interest of the country generally to adopt a voters' list which would allow these young men to vote and which had all the names of those entitled to vote upon it, and the names of dead men and absentees excluded. Looking at the matter entirely free from political bias I think that it would be in the interest of the country generally

Mr. CHARLTON.