

ment which it deserves. With the exception of the hon. member for Brockville (Mr. Wood) I have not heard one hon. gentleman on the other side give a single valid reason why this Bill should not be passed; while even the hon. member for Brockville, in his argument, I submit with all due deference, indulged in fallacies and sophistries. His argument is entirely specious, and did not effectually assail any of the fundamental principles of the Bill. Now, I submit that the section in the Bill which is the crux of the whole disapprobation on the point of hon. gentlemen opposite, is section 7, which reads as follows:—

Subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, the qualifications and conditions necessary to entitle a person to vote at a Dominion election shall be those entitling a person at the time of such election to vote at a provincial election in the electoral district for which the Dominion election is being held, or in some part thereof.

Now, that I conceive to be, in their eyes, the objectionable section of this Bill. But it is the section which contains the principle underlying this Bill, and the principle which I submit ought to underly any Franchise Bill, a principle which has been evaded and ignored by gentlemen on the other side in the various Acts of legislation respecting the franchise of this Dominion. In that short section lies the principle clearly enunciated which ought to be supported by every hon. gentleman in this House, and that is a principle leading to manhood suffrage. I am more than surprised at hearing the hon. member for Toronto (Mr. Ross Robertson) characterize the Bill in the terms in which he did. The hon. gentleman must surely have forgotten that under the common law, elections were in the hands of the people; that the principle, or quality, of manhood suffrage was invaded by the party which is the prototype of hon. gentlemen opposite, when they made their encroachment upon the liberties of the people of England in the year 1429, before which date manhood suffrage was the franchise in England. Hon. gentlemen opposite have been taking the cue, apparently, from that party, and upon every opportunity they have enlarged upon the invasion of that principle of manhood suffrage. That principle, which is admitted, was invaded owing to the aristocratic tendencies of the Government of the day in England, tendencies which are being perpetuated by hon. gentlemen opposite, and in this connection I must again say I was very much surprised to see the hon. member for Toronto rising in his place and attack this Bill, which contains the principle as set forth in paragraph 7. He is inconsistent, and I am waiting for some explanation of his extraordinary statement, that the Bill, including the principle contained in it, is perfidious and iniquitous.

I contend that at the present stage of the political existence of this Dominion an en-

largement of the franchise ought to be given and ought to be recognized; that owing to the inter-communication between the various provinces, the increase in wealth, population and business, greater local power should be given to the different constituent parts of this Dominion. This cannot be done in a better way than by enlarging the franchise. This Bill gives to each province control over its own franchise. The hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) quoted from the British North America Act, our constitution, and I must say I was surprised, as he apparently knows of the existence of our constitution, that he appeared to be utterly ignorant of this principle enunciated in that Act, that the franchise ought to be controlled by the different provinces. That is the cardinal principle, enunciated and recognized in the British North America Act, and that is the principle which this Bill is following out in section No. 7. Hon. gentlemen opposite apparently are labouring under the mistake that the scope of this Parliament is paramount to that of the legislatures of the different provinces. I contend that in regard to matters of local import the scope of this Parliament is not paramount to that of the local legislatures. Why should it be so? Take the franchise itself. Who are in a better position to decide who shall vote or not, or even how often they shall vote or at how many places they shall vote, than are the people of the respective provinces? I have heard no hon. gentleman controvert that position, or indeed refer to it. We will take British Columbia—and I speak for that province, and I hope to hear hon. gentlemen from the various provinces refer to the franchise question in their respective provinces—in that province, should this Bill pass, the franchise would be very free and full indeed, and open, if at all, in my opinion to very few objections. The franchise in that province at present is exceedingly liberal, and so far as our province is concerned there is no possible objection to this Bill becoming law, and I venture to say that hon. gentlemen sitting on this side of the House, if not hon. gentlemen sitting opposite, will find, if this Bill passes, their respective provinces will raise no objection to it. In British Columbia, according to the Elections Act, every male of the full age of twenty-one years, not being disqualified by that Act or by any other law in force in the province, being entitled to the privileges of a natural born British subject, having resided in the province twelve months, and in the electoral district in which he claims to vote for two months immediately previous to the time he claims to vote, and being duly registered under the Act, shall be entitled to vote. No Indians or Chinamen are permitted to vote. So far as this franchise is concerned, there cannot be any objection raised to it. Another point which strikes me very forcibly, and perhaps hon. gentle-