

clearly see that all their efforts have not resulted in any demand coming up from the people of the Dominion of Canada asking for a repeal of that Act. Now if that be the case, it seems to me that our course is very clear. But we have other evidence besides the evidence that there is no demand for a repeal of that Act. We have had two elections take place upon these lists, one in 1887 and the other in 1891. Upon both those occasions hon. gentlemen opposite made the Franchise Bill one of their test questions, indeed I may say that hon. gentlemen went to the country more especially upon that question as one upon which the elections should turn. In 1887 hon. gentlemen were unsuccessful before the people; in 1891 they were equally unsuccessful before the people. As for the election of 1896, I do not think that any hon. gentleman will go so far as to say that they can claim a verdict upon that question as a result of those elections. The truth is that hon. gentlemen gained that election simply by a fluke. So conscious are they of that fact that since they have been in office they have not attempted to repeal one single act that they had condemned so strongly, they do not attempt to redeem a single pledge they had made to the people. It is quite plain, from what has occurred, that hon. gentlemen opposite were then either insincere in their professions, or else they have found since they came into office, that if they carried them out, they would be running counter to public opinion in this country. It is true, the Liberal party out of office made a pledge that the franchise would be repealed, but that pledge of theirs was not any more solemn than their pledge that every vestige of protection would be wiped away. Two years' experience has shown that they have no intention to do that; indeed, the country seems to take it for granted that the Liberals are not to be held responsible for their pledges. Whatever concern that may be to the Liberal party, it is of great concern to the people of Canada, because if they have proven false to their pledges, the country has benefited by it, and we have not had the disturbance in trade and commerce which would have followed on any attempt on their part to keep faith. No doubt, it is to be heralded from one end of Canada to the other, that this repeal of the Franchise Act is to be a sort of redeemer for all the broken pledges of hon. gentlemen opposite, and if that be so, it would have been more consistent had these gentlemen tried to redeem their character in some other direction. But the great difficulty which meets the Liberal party now is, that, from the very outset, they have in an almost insane and unreasoning way, given opposition to the Dominion Franchise Act, and consequently nothing can appease their wrath but the total repeal of that measure. In fact, the Prime Minister stated that nothing but a complete repeal of the Act would be a fair compensation for the

wrongs suffered by the people of Canada for so many years. Hon. gentlemen opposite have taken a not very creditable course in this House and in the country in their opposition to this law. They sought to back up their objections to it by holding up the judges of this country as blind tools in the hands of the Conservatives, and they charged these judges with revising the list in the interests of that political party. The hon. member for East Huron (Mr. Macdonald) declared, the other evening, that the great difficulty of the Liberal party in that revision was, that they had to watch the revising officers, and, translated into plain English, that statement means that the judges of this country who acted as revising officers, were false to their sworn obligations. I am glad to say, Sir, that the members of the judiciary of Canada are above any such false aspersions, for we know that if they err at all, it is an error of judgment, and not one arising from venal motives. I say, Sir, that there was no foundation for the imputations which the Liberals made against our judiciary, and which imputations were made for the sole purpose of backing up their statements that the Franchise Act was bad from the beginning. I am prepared to admit that the franchise law has many faults, but it never had the fault of being any political advantage to one party or the other in this country. Any statements to the contrary are absolutely destitute of truth, and yet such statements have been made by hon. gentlemen opposite to gain paltry party advantages. After all the outcry made by the Liberal party against the Dominion Franchise Act for years and years, the people of the country have shown, by the general elections of 1887 and 1891, that they upheld the Conservative party in passing that law, and even to-day there has not been a single petition presented to this House in support of the course taken by hon. gentlemen opposite in proposing to repeal that Act. In view of the denunciation of the judges and the revising officers by the Liberal party, it is a very curious thing that these very gentlemen opposite, under their proposed Bill, place the final revision of the lists under the control of these same judges. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the slanders that hon. gentlemen opposite have set afloat. I do not say, Sir, that all the Liberal members engaged in this warfare against the judges and the revising officers, but I am sorry to say that a great number of hon. gentlemen opposite were guilty of that offence. Even the other day, the right hon. the First Minister declared here, that these lists were a terror to the people. If they were a terror to the people because of the expense, the hon. gentleman did not say so; and so he left it to be inferred that there was some other ground for the terror which these lists inspired. Hon. gentlemen opposite tell us that this is the most infamous Act ever