

retrograde step. It is going backwards in the conduct of elections, and giving control over our franchise to the local legislatures. As has been pointed out in this House, and will be pointed out again, the proposition that a man may have half a dozen votes in one province, and only one in another province, and that for the same parliament, looks so incongruous, so unfair, and so unjust, that we have only to mention it to secure its condemnation by the electorate. Take the last election that was held two or three years ago, that on the plebiscite. In the province of Quebec a voter could vote in half a dozen different constituencies, whereas in the province of Ontario he had only the right to vote once. That is a practical point showing the injustice of the Act. But it is unjust all the way through. We are abdicating some of the important functions that the Confederation Act confers upon us, and we are handing them over to the local legislatures on the plea of economy, or some other plea. It cannot be on any plea of justice or fair-play, because I think that the members of the parliament of Canada are the best qualified to say what the franchise should be for this House, they are the only parties who can make that franchise a uniform one, or as near uniform as possible. It may be said that the last Franchise Act was not uniform. It is true that it was not exactly uniform, but it embodied the principle of uniformity, and where it deviated from that principle, it was because of some practical difficulty. But in this Act there is a deviation in every province, not because of any practical difficulty, but on the pretended plea of economy. You may say that it will work all right while the present government is in power, and while the local legislatures are in sympathy with the present government, and that the Dominion and local legislatures will work hand in glove together. But, Sir, that may not always be the case; in fact the indications just now surrounding us on all sides point to an early change, when not only the Dominion government, but the local government will altogether go Conservative. It looks so much like it on all hands, that I say we have to face that eventually, and in that case the evil that I am now predicting would not be so likely to occur, because the Conservative party, recognizing, as they do, the necessity for a Dominion franchise, would find it to be fair and equitable that they should again adopt a Dominion franchise and have future elections held under some other Act. Difficulties are cropping up; they have had to make amendments to this Act which we will refer to as we proceed, showing the impracticability of the working of the law as laid down by the government of the day. I have no faith that they will do so, but, if they consulted the best interests of the country, if they

consulted the interests of the parliament of Canada, they would go back to the old franchise, to the laws that we had enacted which were not perfect in the working out, but which, if the proposal made by the hon. leader of the opposition had been adopted, would have been made most effective and useful legislation, and would have given us a truer index of the will of the electors of the country than could be obtained by any other legislation.

Mr. JAMES McMULLEN (North Wellington). Mr. Chairman, I just desire to say a word or two in reply to my hon. friend (Mr. Wallace). I certainly think that the proposed change particularly in the province of Ontario, to one man one vote, is a most desirable one. We know perfectly well that in the suburbs of Toronto, during the last two or three Dominion elections, there has been any number of faggot votes polled for candidates whose constituencies include those suburbs. I do not wonder that my hon. friend should advocate very strongly the continuation of the Act that contributed very materially to his election in West York by permitting of a dual vote. I dare say that he fears a return to the one man one vote principle. The hon. gentleman complains that under the new law electors in Quebec will not be confined to one vote, while in the province of Ontario they will only have one vote and he cites the case of the plebiscite. If there is any case in which an injustice might have been done it might have happened in connection with the plebiscite, but in connection with a general election it cannot happen for the simple reason that the people of Quebec elect a certain number of representatives fixed by statute. They cannot elect any more and they are not required to elect any less. The people of Quebec know best themselves what franchise to adopt for the election of members of this House. I would like to know what difference it makes to the people of Ontario under what system or method the people of Quebec elect the sixty-five representatives that they send here. We elect in Ontario some ninety members, and the people of Ontario have a right to adopt their own franchise. It is a matter of no concern if we elect a certain specified number of members as to how we elect the number that we send here. As far as that is concerned it makes no difference to Quebec. In the republic to the south of us, where they have 70,000,000 people, each state appoints its own franchise, and it is under that franchise that the president is elected. The United States do not make a franchise of their own.

Mr. MONTAGUE. But they have manhood suffrage.

Mr. McMULLEN. Of course, they have manhood suffrage, but they have their