

"Whoever, for the purpose of assisting in any election to the Parliament of Canada, or to the Legislature of any of the Provinces of Canada, while performing any such contract as in the first section of the said Act mentioned, or awaiting payment in respect of any such contract."

Now, the House objected strongly, and I did personally, as an individual member, to this phrase "awaiting payment in respect of any such contract." After a man has had a contract with the Government and performed all the work upon it, and has ceased to have anything to do with the contract, but has not got his money, he is liable to be sent to gaol for a year, and to pay a large sum of money because the Government refused to pay the amount. It may be a matter of long litigation. Look, for example, at the case of the Inter-colonial Railway, which has been built for many years. All those claims are not settled yet, though the railway has been running for years, and yet this Bill disfranchises any one of those persons—he cannot be elected a member of Parliament, because ten years ago they fulfilled their contract and are awaiting their payment from the Government. This measure provides that if a contractor, while awaiting payment in respect to his contract, offers to give or promises to give any sum of money for the purpose of assisting in any election, either for himself or anybody else, he shall be liable to a penalty and shall go to gaol at the discretion of the court for one month or twelve months. So he is disfranchised, and cannot be a member of Parliament and cannot assist either in his own Election or in the election of his friends, even though the expenses should be as moderate as they were in the case which my hon. friend behind me has alluded to. This provision was considered exceedingly objectionable last Session, and in Committee I shall move to strike out these words, and after they are struck out, so far as I am personally concerned, I do not object to the rest of the Bill.

Motion agreed to; and the House resolved itself into Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I move to amend the Bill in the way I have stated.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. The point raised by the hon. gentleman may be fair enough as regards the man's own election. My hon. friend, I presume, did not intend to interfere with that. But there are very grave objections to any man who has an unsettled claim against the Government being allowed to subscribe to Elections. There is no more fertile source of bribery than the desire of men, who have large unsettled claims against the Government, to obtain a favourable settlement. And I think my hon. friend beside me is quite right in saying that this is a matter which should be settled by law. While men have these unsettled claims against the Government, they should not be allowed to subscribe to the election funds of either side. There is no intention of disfranchising anybody. They are not deprived of their votes, though I think there may be force in the First Minister's contention, that a man should not be prevented from subscribing to his own election.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I think my first objection, relating to a man's own election, is unanswerable; indeed, the hon. gentleman admits that it is. But after a contractor has fulfilled his contract, the action of the Government in keeping him out of his money should not prevent him from having the same right as any other man in the land. No Government should be able, by hanging up a man, to prevent him from exercising the same right as any other man.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. We know that very heavy unsettled claims are preferred against the Government by the contractor after the completion of every contract. We know that it is in the contractor's interest that the Government should take a favourable view of his extra

claims. The hon. gentleman knows, and every man in this House knows perfectly well, that whenever a large contract is concluded, these extra claims are preferred, and we all know that the Government are likely to treat them leniently.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman speaks from experience, I have no doubt. He speaks with authority.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. What is the point of order. The hon. gentleman says we all know that Governments are lenient, and I say I suppose he speaks with authority, and we will take his own statement. I am not making any charge of any kind. I am only saying that I suppose he speaks from his own experience, and I do not admit that the experience has been the same on this side. But what I say is this, under this provision any Government could hang up a man and prevent his exercising his rights by refusing to pay his account, and in that way make him subject to an indictment and to imprisonment as committing a misdemeanour. I think it is an outrageous proposition; I think the very statement of it shows that it is outrageous; and I certainly press my amendment to strike out these words.

Mr. CASEY. There is a point that both my hon. friend from South Huron and the hon. leader of the House have overlooked. This measure has been discussed as if it prevented somebody who had already a right to be a candidate at an election from being a candidate. It only applies to contractors, and we know that contractors have not now a right to be candidates or to sit in this House until their contract is settled up.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. That has been decided in the other way. When a contractor has finished his work he ceases to be a contractor, and all that remains to be done is to settle his account. This is decided by English law; and it was decided some years ago, by discussions in this House, who were contractors and who were not.

Mr. CASEY. With regard to the time between the conclusion of their work and the settlement of their account, that contention, no doubt, applies. But my hon. friend is right in insisting that that is just the time when corrupt contributions are likely to be made to Elections—just the time when a man who is hung up by the Government is willing to shell out in order to be cut down.

Mr. IVES. Not cut down.

Mr. CASEY. Not cut down in his figures; he might cut up rough if he were. Without imputing any motives to Governments, past or present, we know that constant charges of this kind have been current, and they will continue to be current until the thing is put an end to. If the hon. gentleman wishes to clear the skirts of the Government of all suspicion of being influenced to make favourable settlements with contractors, if he wishes to guard against such attacks as have been made when contractors, for instance, took frozen whiskey to spend it among the electors, he should support this measure. Now, the hon. gentleman wishes to prevent that sort of thing, and his only way to do it is by adopting this proviso which the First Minister wishes to strike out.

Mr. MILLS. I think that what we ought to consider in a measure of this kind is, whether there is any real mischief likely to occur from the absence of such a measure, and whether there is any evil to be remedied by that particular clause which the hon. First Minister proposes to strike out. What is the proposition alleged by the promoter of the Bill? It is simply this, that a man who has claims against the Government that are still unsettled, claims to which he