

in reference to the course which has been pursued in regard to this Bill.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—My hon. friend has no right to attribute questionable motives to the Government or to make a statement which is absolutely incorrect as to the position I took in introducing the Bill. If the hon. gentleman will look at the Debates he will find that I made a statement of the principles involved.

Hon. Mr. KERR—I heard all the hon. gentleman said. I never heard one word from him to indicate that he personally approved of the Bill, or that the Government had an honest conviction that it was their duty to introduce it, and to extend the franchise as it was proposed.

The SPEAKER—The language of the hon. gentleman is rather strong.

Hon. Mr. KERR—The Bill is rather strong. This is a most iniquitous intrusion upon the right of the soldier, who should be left free and untrammelled to carry on the battle which he is sent to fight. I say this is one of the most iniquitous Bills in that respect which I ever thought would be introduced into an assembly like this. The responsibility is taken by the Government; we have that much about it, but who has said one word as to this being proper legislation, or about the new principles introduced here, of presenting to men in a foreign land, some of whom were not British soldiers until they took the oath to serve as soldiers, men who have no stake in this country and were here for only a short period of two or three months, the right to vote, to decide what is to be the destiny of this country, and which party is to govern this country for a further term of probably five years. I say there is no justification for it. I listened to all that was said, and what I noticed particularly was how little was said and how much was left unsaid. I do not blame my hon. friend for being disgusted with having to father a Bill like this.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I ask my hon. friend to retract that statement. He has no right to make it. He has no right to attribute false motives to me.

Hon. Mr. KERR—My statement is qualified. I say if that is the reason why we have not had the statement, we ought to have it now. I think we ought not to let it pass unnoticed. The idea of the Government, on the last day of the session, with prorogation to take place in two or

three hours, presenting to the country and asking the Senate to endorse a Bill with all that this contains within its four corners, and asking to confer the franchise on people who are fighting the battle of this country on the continent, who are spread over different countries, is impracticable. This franchise is only to be given to a portion of these men. There is a distinction between those in one country and those in another. What about those who happen to be in Egypt when the election takes place? What will happen to those in Constantinople, or those who may be sent to South Africa to fight in defence of the Empire, when the elections come on? We have no intimation of the date on which the election will be held, but we may assume it is going to be as soon as the Government can bring it on. This is being done by men who have stood up in their place in Parliament (and some outside of Parliament have echoed the statement), that we were not alive to the responsibility of our position, and that they, forsooth, who were hunting votes, unknown in their method of working except when exposed in election time, are going to work this thing out so as to snap a verdict, and get votes for men who have no right to be troubled or bothered about voting. What will be thought of us as a deliberate body, being the first people who ever presented to an army of men who are trying to carry our flag on to victory, ballot papers asking them to vote? What will be thought of men who at such a time as this lose sight of the great issues before the world, when the great battles of the world are being fought in the greatest war that has ever been known, a war in which the greatest number of men are engaged that have ever waged any contest, fighting for the lives and liberties, not only of the people of this country but of the world—what would be thought of this deliberative body, this Parliament of Canada getting down to the petty question of how to carry an election by taking polls under circumstances such as are known in the province of Manitoba, and especially in the county of Macdonald, and that is to be called the free voice of the people of Canada, and we are supposed to confer a great privilege on these people. Who is going to identify the men? Who is going to say how they are to vote? How many people are going to be allowed to canvas them before they vote? What provision of protection is to be given to the men who are on the fighting line, who are under the officers known to be most