

while with us the opposite principle prevails, that every power that is not expressly stated in the constitution to belong to the local authority, belongs to the federal authority. So there is one reason why we in Canada should go further in the direction in maintaining federal control over the franchise than they have gone in the United States. I am, therefore, surprised that the right hon. gentleman should have enunciated the constitutional doctrine, if it is a constitutional doctrine, that to the local authorities in this Dominion belongs the right to control the franchise of the country. I am the more surprised that having announced this as the policy of the Liberal party, he should then seek to turn back the hands on the dial and to restrict the franchise by giving control of it over to the different provinces. Now, Sir, I sympathise heartily with the views expressed by the hon. member for Lambton (Mr. Lister). I believe the hon. member for Lambton is thoroughly sincere in the views which he has put forward. He has called timely attention to the fact that the Liberal party of Canada pledged itself to this country for many long years that when they got into power they would repeal the Franchise Act of 1895 and amending Acts. They protested vigorously against the enactment of that Act, and from that time down to the last general election they had not ceased to protest vigorously against what they call the iniquities of the Franchise Act of 1895. Sir, I am here to admit that it was part of their duty, and I praise them for it, now to carry out that pledge, that plank in their platform. I say they are bound to carry it out; and when an hon. gentleman flung the charge across the House at me that I was holding out a threat in saying that this Act would not pass this Parliament, and that I was implying that another body would throw it out, that was the furthest thing from my mind and I cannot see how I could have been so entirely misunderstood. When I made that statement I was interrupted by an hon. gentleman from the other side of the House who asked me: Where will it be defeated? and I replied: In this Chamber. Therefore, when the hon. gentleman charged me with threatening that this Bill would be thrown out in some other Chamber, he entirely misunderstood me. I do not believe in that policy, with regard to this Bill. I am not here to say what the duty of any branch of this Parliament may be in regard to this or any other Bill. I believe that each branch of this Parliament is free to do as it pleases with regard to any piece of legislation. But I am free to say that since the Liberal party of Canada put the plank in their platform that they would repeal the Franchise Act of 1895, I think it is their duty to do so. I think in that respect they represent the voice of the people of this country—I freely admit that. Why, Sir, it would be strange if I did not admit it. It may not be interesting to this House for me to explain my

own position with regard to the Franchise Act of 1895. However, I may be allowed to remind the House, and I do so in no boasting spirit, that when I first came into this Chamber in 1893, I was honoured by an invitation to move the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. At that time, although there was no mention of the Franchise Act in the Speech from the Throne, I departed from the matter of that Speech and took occasion to declare that I was in favour of the repeal of the Franchise Act as it then existed. But if the Liberal party is held to fulfil its pledges to repeal the Franchise Act, it does not follow, and I think the hon. member for Lambton will agree with me here, that in repealing that Act it is necessary to enact this one. The repeal of the Franchise Act of 1895 does not necessarily mean the enactment of such a piece of legislation as this. I am willing to say that the Solicitor General has done his best in a difficult situation in endeavouring to frame this Bill, but I am also bold to state, after a careful study of this Act, that I do not believe it ever came under the consideration of all the hon. gentlemen representing the different provinces in the Government. Does the Minister of Railways and Canals, for instance, tell me that he considered this Bill and helped to frame it in its present shape? I can tell him that in his own province some sections of it are perfectly unworkable, and I think he knows it. Why, he himself, when he was Attorney General of New Brunswick, passed an Act dividing the parish of Dundas, in the county I represent, all the electors in which had previously voted at one poll, and which formed one subdivision at local elections. He cut off a small part of that parish, and made a separate subdivision, but he made no further provision, and when the local elections followed soon after, the sheriff and returning officer did not know what to do. The returning officer wired the hon. gentleman to get his opinion as to what he should do in the premises, and I may say that the hon. gentleman had no opinion to give him at that time, and could not tell him what to do. There was no lawyer in the country that could tell him what to do, because the law dividing the parish had made no provision allowing the returning officer to make a separate list for each subdivision, and left him completely in the dark. With that instance before us, I cannot believe, therefore, that the Minister of Railways and Canals, the former Attorney General of New Brunswick, helped to frame a Bill of this kind in which it is provided that the subdivisions for the local elections shall be taken for the Dominion elections, and that the lists for those subdivisions shall be used for Dominion elections. Let me tell the Solicitor General that in the parish of Dundas and in the parish of Wellington, in my county, there are from 900 to 1,000 votes in each of these parishes, and all have to vote at one poll. If you are going