

respect for it, and when, by the Gerrymander Bill, hon. gentlemen opposite proposed to legislate out of Parliament, by an Act of Parliament, certain leading members of the House, there was a boldness and a dash about it that half redeemed its infamy. But in regard to the present Bill there is a sort of sneaking villainy about it which gives it a character all its own, and renders it altogether unapproachable in its infamy.

Mr. SPEAKER. I think the hon. gentleman should hardly characterise, in such terms, a Bill now before the House.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I am alluding to this piece of paper. I will try, however, and not use such terms again. Talk about Mr. Mowat's Gerrymander Bill. I do not intend to discuss that Bill; I hardly know its provisions; I have only cursorily looked over it. But we all know what was attempted by the Gerrymander Bill passed by this House. There was the leader of the Opposition, a man who had met the leader of the Government in a hundred fights, a man who never asked for odds or struck below the belt, and who at the time was on a sick bed from which it was hardly expected he would ever rise. How did the right hon. gentleman deal with him? He got his henchmen to tie him hand and foot and then dared him to fight. By this measure it is proposed to do something of the same kind—to place in the hands of irresponsible men the power to decide who shall and who shall not be members of Parliament. I want to give one word of warning to the Government. It is within my recollection, although I was very young then, that the people of this country, and especially in Quebec, were driven into rebellion because they were denied their rights. Time brings its revenges. At the opening of this Session we saw the Premier unveil the statue of a man on whose head a price was set at that time, and who was called a rebel. Now we know him as a patriot. Later on, in the years 1869-70, a part of our Dominion was driven into rebellion again—I do not say whether rightly or wrongly, but the people had grievances. They were denied that autonomy which every people has a right to claim under British rule; they were driven to rebellion, and at least one precious life was lost to the country. And, Sir, what is the condition of things to-day. I do not wish to say one word which could in any way be construed to encourage rebellion. I believe it is the duty of the Opposition to do all they can to assist the Government in putting down that rebellion. Sir, we on this side are proud of our leader in this House; we have always felt proud of him, and never have we felt prouder of him than during the last week or two, when with the weapon in his hand, with which he might strike the Government, he has refrained from doing it, and has, by every means in his power, assisted the Government in putting down that rebellion. I repeat that I do not want to say one word that could be construed into anything like sympathy with rebellion, but this I must say, that the manner in which that commission was appointed and hurried away to redress grievances and right wrongs, shows that both grievances and wrongs must have existed. But, Sir, I hope that the matter may soon be settled without any further bloodshed, but I want to warn the Government that there is danger ahead. From one end of the Dominion to the other, there are ominous whisperings and murmurings. People are being ground down by taxes, when they were told that their taxes would not be increased; the revenues are diminishing, so that they will not meet the expenditures, and people are beginning to ask what they have gained by Confederation. By such notorious Acts as the Gerrymander Bill they have been depriving a part of the people of their just rights to representation in this House, and by this Act it is sought to take away from them what little rights they have left. I warn the Gov-

Mr. ARMSTRONG.

ernment that they had better consider in time, for it may be that a high-spirited people may consider death better than dishonor. If they trample on the rights of the people it may be—I do not want to live to see it—that the time may come when the people will consider that it is dishonorable to live under any such degrading conditions, and that this Confederation, which we so wish to perpetuate, may fall to pieces, as the direct result of the misgovernment of hon. gentlemen opposite. I repeat I do not wish to live to see it, but I want the Government to see and consider the matter in time, and not do anything which will unnecessarily cause friction in the Government of this country.

Mr. WATSON. At this early hour in the morning it is not my intention to occupy more than a few moments. But as this important Bill is one which affects the Province from which I come, I do not wish to give a silent vote upon it. I think it is a Bill which is not calculated in the best interests of the Dominion of Canada, as a whole, or of any particular Province, but that it is introduced for the purpose of promoting the party interests of hon. gentlemen opposite. It is a Bill calculated to disfranchise a certain number of people—

Mr. HESSON. Are they Grits?

Mr. WATSON. The hon. member for North Perth (Mr. Hesson), who is continually interrupting this House, I believe has two sons in our Province, who should be disfranchised, as they are in the employ of the Government. I hope that he will keep quiet, for he has been interrupting the House the whole night. We have a Franchise Bill in Manitoba, with which the people of that Province are perfectly satisfied, as it gives every protection against parties voting who are not entitled to vote and in favor of those who have a right to vote. The qualifications are less than those in the Bill under discussion, because in Manitoba the owner of property to the extent of \$100 has a vote, while this Bill requires a much larger qualification. I do not think that the Government should introduce a measure of this kind, unless it is a Bill for universal suffrage, because I believe myself that a Bill extending the franchise to every man in Canada, would be a proper Bill, under present circumstances. Every man contributes to the revenue under the present high protective policy, and therefore he should be a voter, and until the Government and the people see fit to go as far as universal suffrage, I do not think they should legislate in this matter at all. In our Province the voters' lists are prepared by the municipalities; they are posted a sufficient time to give the people a chance to see the lists, and there is then a court of revision under the municipalities which is better calculated to give a better franchise to the people than any revising barristers that could be appointed, for there is less chance of any corruption or any mistakes in the lists. They have power to appeal to the county judge, who is always in a position to be appealed to by the electors who may wish to have names inserted on the list, or improper names struck off. If the Government should see fit to make this clause of the Bill apply so that judges should be the revising barristers, it would not change the effect of the Act in the Province of Manitoba to any great extent, as now they are practically the revising barristers in that Province. But I am satisfied that the Government do not intend to appoint judges as the revising barristers, and, at any rate, the judges, I do not believe, would have the time to devote to this work. I do not think it is the intention of the Government to take the lists as prepared by the municipalities, and as another list would not be satisfactory to the people, or to this side of the House, I shall oppose this Bill at every stage. I think it is an infamous Bill, and one which is not calculated for the best interests of the electors of Canada.

Mr. VAIL. I am very sorry to be obliged to address the House at this hour of the morning, but I have waited until