

pointed out by the hon. member for Annapolis (Mr. Mills), where revisers mistook their duties. But it is well understood that they are not to be left off and have not been left off. And my hon. friend (Sir Charles Tupper) knows that there is no pretense that Dominion officials are disqualified in municipal elections, and yet these elections are held upon the lists thus prepared.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I could not have a better evidence given to this House of the utterly untenable position that my hon. friend the Minister of Finance occupies than the defence put forth by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Russell), one of the ablest jurists in this House. If that hon. gentleman has nothing more to say in defence of the position of the Finance Minister than he has said just now, it will be unnecessary for me to take up much further time. I would ask the hon. gentleman: Can the fact that the lists are made up perhaps long before the election takes place controvert the fact that under the Nova Scotia law this clause is to be found, as every hon. gentleman has it in his hand, furnished him, I am glad to say, by the Solicitor General? This is given as Revised Statutes, chap. 4, section 67:

Any one who, within fifteen days before the election, was an employee or in the receipt of wages or emolument of any kind as such employee in the post office, the custom-house, the Inland Revenue Department, the lighthouse service, on the Government railroads, in the Crown lands office, or the local public works and mines, but nothing in section to extend to contractors.

And so on. There is an absolute disqualification by name of large classes of people, and that clause is embodied in the law that is here proposed.

Mr. RUSSELL. Disqualification of whom? Not Dominion officials, but Dominion officials who are in receipt of emoluments 15 days before the elections.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I am afraid my hon. friend (Mr. Russell) has been looking at this with a microscope.

Mr. RUSSELL. If by that the hon. gentleman means that I have been looking at it with accuracy, I do not deny it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. As I say, there is a disqualification absolute and complete of all persons who are in receipt of money from the Dominion. Fifteen days has nothing to do with postmasters and customs' officers and Inland Revenue Department officers and railway employees; it has nothing to do with parties who have been for long years in the enjoyment of these offices. It has no bearing on the question that the hon. gentleman has raised. I have read the section which declares that British subjects of the full age of 21 years, and not disqualified by any section of this Act, are

entitled to have their names on the lists. And here you have a disqualification by a section of the Act. I cannot conceive how it is possible for any case to be made clearer, more overwhelming or more complete. Now, Sir, I may recall to the mind of hon. members the ground upon which that disqualification was made. In those days, Sir, the hon. Minister of Finance—

The PRIME MINISTER. I must ask my hon. friend to keep to the question, and the question is the Indian franchise, and not the franchise in Nova Scotia.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. My hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) is not aware that I am replying to the speech made by the Minister of Finance this afternoon. If the Minister of Finance, from the Treasury benches, is permitted to discuss this question as he did, am I not right in calling the attention of the Chair to the answer?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Campbell). I hope hon. members will keep to the point.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I am afraid I have been keeping too close to the point. I was about to explain how this disqualification was put on the Statute-book of Nova Scotia. The Liberal party of that time, as the Minister of Finance knows, was in bitter hostility to the Dominion of Canada, and he knows that the Attorney General of Nova Scotia, in introducing this Bill in 1871, said:

Before the session closed such laws should be passed that every person who had the smell of Canada upon him would be excluded from this House.

That was the policy of the Liberal party at that time, and this Bill would prevent any person in the employ of the Canadian Government from being walked up to the polls and voting, whether he was asked or not.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. "Being walked up." That was it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I am not quite certain whether he walked up or whether he was carried up in a carriage. At all events, these are the circumstances under which this Bill was passed; and I ask the Solicitor General as a loyal Canadian, I ask him as a man who believes in maintaining the integrity of this wide Dominion—indeed I do not require to ask him, because he has already said that he is preparing to deal with this question in such a way as will enable these parties thus disfranchised to vote, and I thank him sincerely for it. I am aware that the Government has changed hands, that these officials are now the officials of a Liberal Government. But that would not induce me for a moment to lend myself to the degradation of an official because the Government was in the hands of one party or the other. I want to see the franchise in the hands of men of independent character