

for a certain purpose, and was founded on no such general principle as ought to afford the *raison d'être* for a national measure. But it appears that the right hon. leader of the Government himself has not always felt as keenly as he does now on this subject. Frequent allusion has been made to the Bill passed by the hon. member for East York in 1874, adopting the provincial franchises. Now, it is a matter of history that although the present leader of the Government expressed his preference at that time for a uniform franchise, he gave his support to that Bill to the extent that he did not oppose it, and called for no divisions upon it, and offered to the then leader of the Government his cordial assistance in perfecting the Bill in committee, and he granted that assistance. He gave his assent to it, as far as a member of Parliament could give his assent to a Bill without actually voting for it, and he has given us no reasons since to show why he should now believe the application of that principle necessary which he did not think was necessary at that time, although he expressed a personal preference for it. Sir, I cannot close without a few references to the remarks made by the hon. member for Ottawa city (Mr. Mackintosh) who spoke earlier in the evening. He gave voice to some of the ordinary objections which are made to our course in regard to this Bill. He said we complained that we had not time to fully discuss the Bill. Why, he said, it has been up time and again for fifteen years back; and surely, if the Opposition have been paying attention to the affairs of the country, they must know what is in it. The hon. gentleman forgot that this Bill is not now in all respects what it was before. When it was up before it had not this revolutionary feature of the appointment of revising officers to make lists *ab initio*. We have had the Bill up with a provision for a revising board to correct the lists made by the municipal officers. We have had it up without female suffrage. We have had it up in all shapes, but not as it now stands. We have not had it before with all its present objectionable features. There is another reason why we did not pay much attention to this Bill. The right hon. father of the Bill cried wolf so often, he told us that it was going to be brought into the world so many times, that we gave up believing him. We thought it was kept on hand for us to hack at when we had not very much to do. We did not think we should be called upon at this period of the parliamentary term to consider a Bill which had almost become a laughingstock from the number of times it had been introduced and withdrawn. We did not believe he was going to force upon the country a Bill like this, changing the whole basis of our representative system, without submitting it to the people. We did not imagine that he could so far forget all the principles of constitutional government as to change the voting power in the constituencies, without asking the opinion of the present constituencies upon it. This proposal has scarcely ever been discussed on any platform, yet he now wants to change completely the whole basis of our representation. We may be told that it will be discussed at the next elections. But who will pronounce judgment then? The people whose franchise is now at stake? Not at all; it will be pronounced upon by a new list of voters, made by the hon. gentlemen's patent machine and not by those whose interests we are now considering; those who will be disfranchised by this Act will have no opportunity of being consulted on the subject at all; they will be given no opportunity of expressing their opinion on their disfranchisement. It may be very well to say: Give us the means of packing the jury, let us put whom we like upon the voters' lists, and then we will submit to the verdict of the country; but that is not a course which is in accord with the spirit of our constitution. The hon. gentleman whose remarks I am discussing proposed to show that we, on this side, have no regard for the franchise, and that we had overridden the rights of the people and the rights of the judges on some occasions, when we

Mr. CASEY.

have had the power, and that Mr. Mowat carried on a similar course of action in Ontario. The hon. gentleman, I say, proposed to show this, but he did not get beyond the proposal; the only instance of overriding anybody which he referred to, was in the case of Judge Wilson, who was criticised by the *Globe* newspaper, in connection with his action in an election case, but when the motion was made to show rule why Mr. Brown should not be committed for contempt of court, this case was argued in court before three judges, including Judge Wilson, who, however, did not pronounce on the case; the other judges differing, the decision was that there should be no rule granted. There was an overriding in that case, but it was an overriding of the pretention of Judge Wilson, that his action was not subject to criticism, and in many subsequent election cases the result of that wholesome lesson has been apparent. The hon. gentleman said this Government would be derelict in its duty if it did not pass an uniform franchise, but still he would have liked to see the Bill amended and made suitable, in the case of Prince Edward Island to the inhabitants of that Province. That was a most remarkable sentence, expressing the average clearness of view which prevails on the other side of the House on this subject. They think the Government ought to do this, but are not prepared to blame the Government in not having done it before; and now that they are doing it, they think the Government would do well to make such breaches in the uniformity of the Bill as to render it acceptable to the various Provinces. I hope amendments will be made in this sense, in favor of each Province individually, because it will render more clear to the general public what now is evident to us, that every provision of the Bill is a farce, except the one provision, which is the life and soul of the Bill, and for which the right hon. Premier would sacrifice all the rest of the provisions, namely, the one giving him control of the voters' lists. I am not going more into detail; I should hardly have spoken at this late stage were it not for the fact that I believe so revolutionary, so unconstitutional a Bill—let me go further, and quote the language of one of the gentleman's supporters of the Government, who, however, on this occasion, has shown his independence, by shaking off the trammels of party—this monstrous Bill, which should put to the blush the people who propose it, and which will crush the Government at the next elections. Yet even those bold, manly words are not strong enough to characterise this attempt upon the liberties of the country in the manner in which they should be characterised. It is as gross an attack upon our principles as would be an attack on our personal property—on our possessions. There is no civil right which is more sacred than the franchise, and a Bill which proposes to take the adjudication of the right of the franchise from the courts, and put it in the hands of the Government, is nothing less than a monstrous and shameless attack upon the liberties of the people.

Mr. GILLMOR. This is the most remarkable audience I ever attempted to address since I have been in public life—125 empty chairs and about twenty members asleep. If you were only asleep yourself, Mr. Speaker, the picture would be perfect; and I do not see any members of New Brunswick on the Conservative side at all.

Mr. BLAKE. There is one.

Mr. GILLMOR. Yes; I see my hon. friend from Westmoreland (Mr. Wood), the last rose of summer, not exactly blooming, but sleeping alone. I have always thought that Parliament was a deliberative assembly, that we were here for the purpose of discussion, to advance arguments, and to listen to arguments, in order that we might come to a correct judgment on the questions before the House; but that system has long since passed away, and legislation is no longer considered in Parliament. It is now considered in