

Hon. Sir OLIVER MOWAT—My hon. friend is probably referring to something done by the late Dominion government and imagines it was done by the Ontario government.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—No, it was before the Franchise Act was passed. My recollection is tolerably good on that point. What impressed it on my mind, is the fact that I had to travel through the whole of my constituency, a county one hundred miles deep and thirty miles wide, in order to watch my hon. friend's friends, that they did not stuff the lists to defeat me at the then coming elections. At that time the Ontario voters' list was used for the Dominion elections as well as for the provincial elections. I have heard of other cases of a similar character in other provinces. I lay down this principle: that this Parliament should not be subject to the whim or caprice of any local legislature in tampering with the voters' list as they think proper. I hope before they get through that some uniform system—I care not how cheap you make it, I care not though it be universal suffrage,—may be adopted by which we will have uniformity. I would rather have a system of that kind than one subject to the whim and dishonesty of any political party in any province. Next, we have the question of the canals and my hon. friend congratulated the government on what they are doing to improve the canal system. To read the speeches of those who support the government, one would suppose that the enlargement of the canals, the adoption of cold storage and the settlement of the Behring Sea claims, were new subjects; something which had just emanated from their brilliant intellects. My hon. friend must know that the cold storage project was being carried out to its fullest extent by the late administration and has only being added to by the present Minister of Agriculture. For what he is doing he deserves credit. I will be the last to detract from any credit due to him for extending that principle, but does not the honourable gentlemen know, that in preparing a draft contract for the fast Atlantic line of steamers the late government had, in one of their principal clauses, provided for cold storage to the extent of thousands of tons, in order that the trade of this country in articles of a perishable character might be

extended? Yet these gentlemen talk through the country as though they had originated these projects. The deepening of the canals has been carried on from year to year. I am only sorry that they did not go further. I wish a decision had been arrived at long ago to sink every lock twenty feet, so that as the trade of the country justified it the canals could be deepened without going to the great expense that will otherwise be involved in deepening them. If there is one thing of which I am proud of having done when acting as Minister of Railways and Canals, it is, that after visiting the Sault Ste. Marie Canal with the Hon. Sir Frank Smith, then a member of the cabinet, we changed the size of the locks to sixty feet in width instead of one hundred feet, and its length from 600 to 900 feet long, by which the canal can be worked more economically. Every engineer connected with the United States Sault Canal, and on this side of the line, confesses now that it was an improvement and of incalculable benefit to the trade of this country. Had we carried out a system of that kind on the whole of the canals from the beginning, I believe a great saving would have been effected, and it may be within the experience of many who are here to-day, that it will be necessary to go to a large expenditure in the enlargement of our canals to meet the requirements of the trade of the country. The very best evidence of this fact is that the tonnage passing through the Sault Canals, on both sides, during open navigation, exceeds the tonnage passing through the Suez Canal during the whole year. It is an indication of the extraordinary development of our trade and justifies the adoption of large measures. If there has been one ground of complaint against the late government—and I admit there was—it has been because they did not prosecute these works rapidly enough so that we might have the full advantages of a 14 foot canal from one end of the route to the other, because the system is comparatively useless for through trade until the whole of it is completed to that depth. As to the plebiscite, I am opposed to it on principle. I think it is an evasion of the constitution under which we live. I am of the opinion that under responsible government the government of the day, no matter to what party it belongs, should have the courage to come down with a measure if they think it is in the interest of the country,