

Hon. John Dryden : I crave the indulgence of the House, while for the third time I give expression to my views on the proposition contained in the honorable gentleman's Bill. I desire to congratulate him on the advanced position he now takes as compared with that of former years. In all of his previous measures he proposed to give the franchise to certain classes only among women; but it is evident that the principle of the parliamentary franchise, if once conceded to women, must in the end be given to all, as it was given to all men. I prefer, therefore, to discuss the subject on this broad basis rather than piece by piece.

On some former occasions, when this matter has been brought to the attention of the Legislature, it has been the custom to treat it in a light, trifling manner, and to consider it as something which merely forms amusement for the time being. But, in my judgment, it is by no means a light matter; it is a most serious question; it involves far-reaching results, and it is, undoubtedly, one of the most revolutionary measures ever submitted to this Legislature. The measure proposes to introduce at one sweep into the political arena at least one hundred per cent. more voters—more than doubling the number that we have at present on the rolls—and these of a class yet to be educated in the political affairs of the Province. And not only this, but it would double the cost of the preparation of the voters' lists throughout the Province, and vastly increase the labors of the canvass in every political campaign.

I am aware that different persons will form their opinion of the merits of this Bill from very different reasons. Some who may not stop to think of the effects of such a measure are ready to say: "If women so wish, let them vote." Others desire to inquire how the measure will affect the party—if it will add to the party's strength they are ready to endorse it; but, if not, they would oppose it on that ground. Others, who may be already members of the Legisla-