

Mr. DAVIES. I cannot reconcile it to my views to vote in favor of the exclusion of any condition, class or race from the rights of citizenship, when it is a precedent to their obtaining those rights that they should become British subjects. If a Chinaman becomes a British subject it is not right that a brand should be placed on his forehead, so that other men may avoid him. As a member of this House, and as a Radical, I enter my protest against this reactionary proposal. It is especially unfair, if the ignorant Indian is to have the right of the franchise conferred on him, that the Chinaman, who has become a British subject, who is an honest and a hard-working man, and has made up his mind to live in the country, should be excluded from taking part in the politics of the country. This is a new country; we should invite all classes of settlers to it, and make them feel, when they come here and make it their home, that they stand on the same footing as the people born here. The old exclusive idea has vanished. I enter my protest against this amendment. I am in favor of any one who has become a British subject and has the necessary qualifications having the right to exercise the franchise; and I would suggest to the hon. member from British Columbia that inasmuch as he has voted in favor of the Indians having the right to exercise the franchise, should his astute opponent capture the Chinese vote he might offset that by capturing the Indian vote. It is not right or fair that a broad question of principle should be decided by the passion or prejudice of those who come from one section of the Dominion alone. I have every regard and respect for the 10,000 or 15,000 whites who live in British Columbia, but decline to admit that their prejudices—

Mr. SHAKESPEARE. I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman has made a misstatement. He refers to us as 10,000 or 15,000 white people in British Columbia. That is a misstatement.

Mr. DAVIES. How many are there?

Mr. SHAKESPEARE. I have told you and other hon. gentlemen, on more than one occasion, what numbers there are, but you take delight in misrepresenting things as they are in British Columbia.

Mr. DAVIES. Since the hon. gentleman has interrupted me, I hope he will have the courtesy to explain in what my mistake consists. How many thousands are there? The hon. gentleman's colleague said there were 15,000.

Mr. HOMER. I said 30,000 whites and 10,000 Chinamen.

Mr. DAVIES. That does not affect my argument in the slightest. By the census of 1881 there are 18,000 whites there. I decline to acknowledge the right of 18,000 or 30,000 whites, which would represent about 6,000 heads of families, to dictate to the whole Dominion a principle which in itself is vicious, which I am sorry to see incorporated in our law, namely, the exclusion of any one race or color from participating in the political franchises and privileges of the people of this Dominion. My contention is, that a Chinaman who has become a British subject by naturalisation, who resides in the country and has acquired the necessary qualification, has as good a right to be allowed to vote as any other British subject of foreign extraction.

Mr. WELDON. I endorse the views of my hon. friend from Queen's, P.E.I. (Mr. Davies). It seems to me that to single out this particular nationality as not being capable of being voters, of exercising the franchise in this Dominion, is unjust and unfair. Very few Chinamen are naturalised; I presume those who become British subjects, whether in British Columbia or elsewhere, intend to make Canada their home. If so, they are as much

entitled to vote as the Indians, who, the First Minister declares, are entitled to vote, or as any other foreigner who may settle down and become a Canadian citizen. Both the Chinese and Japanese have attained a high state of civilisation, and so far as we can gather from the report of the Commission, we find, in the great diversity of opinion, that there is a strong opinion that they are a thrifty and honest race, and I do not see why, when they become naturalised and make Canada their home, they should not be given the right to vote.

Mr. MILLS. I do not exactly agree in the views of my hon. friends from Queen's and St. John. I think the fair test for the exercise of the franchise is the possession of intelligence and public spirit, and if any race or class of people take very little interest in the exercise of the electoral franchise, I do not see any injustice in withholding it from them. I do not think it desirable to encourage the immigration of a large body of Asiatics. Their standard of civil morality, their views of government and of society, are all wholly different from ours; their training is different, and I think if we give them security for life and property for the short time they remain here—and very few become British subjects or acquire property in the country—we do for them all that is done for them in the country of their birth. If it were our desire to encourage the immigration of Chinese we could undertake to confer the electoral franchise upon those of them who give intentions of their desire to exercise the franchise, but I think the majority of them, even of those who are intelligent, and there are some intelligent and educated Chinese, care little or nothing about exercising the franchise. The great importance that is attached to the exercise of the right belongs to the races to which we, in this country, belong, and not to the Mongolians. We are seeking to promote immigration from Europe and not from Asia, and it seems to me that we are perfectly justified in extending the elective franchise, as far as we safely can do so, to every person who comes from Europe to this country and is naturalised, and in withholding it from a class of people that we may be disposed to tolerate, to give security to when they come here, but that we do not regard as desirable citizens to have amongst us. Any one who has read of the social and domestic habits and the morals of the Chinese in California can come to only one conclusion, that there would be moral deterioration to no inconsiderable extent among all classes of the population where they became a numerous body. In view of that fact, I do not think it is desirable to extend to them the elective franchise. I would call attention, however, to the circumstance that the hon. gentlemen who represent British Columbia, while they are anxious that we should not confer the franchise upon a class of citizens who would be very undesirable in British Columbia, are quite ready to confer votes upon parties in other Provinces whom they are not willing to give votes to in their own. They have already voted to confer the franchise upon the Indians, according to the statement made by the First Minister, in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, upon the condition that it shall not be conferred upon the same class of people in British Columbia, who, the First Minister knows, are the most enterprising, intelligent and industrious Indians on this continent. We shall have something more to say on those propositions when we come to the question of qualification; but I rose simply to express my dissent from the views of my hon. friends beside me, and to say that I see no objection to insert this provision, and that I believe we do no wrong in refusing to confer the franchise on the Chinese, who would not themselves desire to have it conferred upon them, and who, if it were conferred upon them, would probably use it as a mere matter of merchandise, instead of regarding it as a great privilege of freedom.