

it is because they have adopted Dominion lines; and when they have had an experience of provincial lists, they will come back and ask the Dominion Parliament to pass a federal franchise and have a list prepared entirely on national lines. If the hon. gentlemen opposite will bring forward a measure which will be reasonable so far as cost is concerned, but which will preserve the federal idea, the federal control of our own franchise, I will be willing to accept and vote for such a proposition. If they will lay down those lines they can obtain a conference with our leaders, and a Bill may be framed that both parties and the people will accept; but hon. gentlemen opposite will never get this side of the House to agree to place ourselves in the hands of provincial politicians, such as there are in Ontario and in other provinces, and abandon federal ideas, and accept provincial ideas advocated by men who have never realized in the slightest degree the national idea and the importance of this great country.

Mr. McCLEARY. I have for some days sat as a learner at the feet of the Gamaliels who have been instructing us in regard to the measure now submitted for our consideration. Unlike my hon. friend from Pontiac (Mr. Poupore), I came here unpledged to my electors, and for the simple reason that they never asked me to pledge myself to vote against the Dominion Franchise Act. But if I came unpledged I am free to confess that I did not come unbiassed, because my judgment was that the Dominion franchise law could be improved and I would have been very glad to have given my vote in favour of a proposition that would have placed in the hands of the people of this country a franchise law more simple and less costly than the existing Act, but at the same time a franchise that would be uniform. I have listened to hear some arguments from gentlemen who are in favour of this Bill, in order that my mind might be brought to a definite conclusion as to my duty in regard to the vote which I shall give. I expected that the right hon. the leader of the House would announce some logical reasons why our present Franchise Act should be repealed, and our franchise handed over to the provincial legislatures. But, Sir, his very first statement convinced me that the attitude of his Government on this question was wrong, for, after stating that the franchise of the people of this country lay at the very basis of our parliamentary institutions, he proceeded to propose that this, which he called the very basis of the Federal Parliament, should be handed over to the provincial legislatures, for their making and their imprimatur. Hon. gentlemen opposite who come from Ontario have told us a good deal about the franchise law in that province, and if we were to believe them we would regard that law as a most guileless thing,

as a law devoid of anything questionable, and which was the very ideal that an honest and intelligent and free electorate should demand. But, Sir, those of us who have experience of the Ontario Franchise Act know that it is not the guileless beauty that the hon. member for East Huron (Mr. Macdonald) represented; nor is it the guileless thing that the hon. member for Kingston referred to, nor yet that beautiful perfection which the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. McMullen) portrayed it to be. The hon. member for East Huron (Mr. Macdonald) told us the other night, that he had before denounced the Dominion Franchise Act as the most iniquitous measure that was ever placed on the Statute-books of this country, and he repeated that statement and assured us that he had not changed his mind. Well, Sir, I do not know that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Macdonald) need have said that, in order to justify any vote of his in support of the Government, because no member in this House—except possibly the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright)—denounced the National Policy in more violent terms than did the hon. gentleman, and yet he had no compunction of conscience in sitting quietly beside his Government and supporting a policy which was changed very little, if at all, from that Conservative National Policy which he for eighteen years had been denouncing. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Macdonald) told us, that we can get our lists from the province of Ontario simply for the cost of printing, and the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Britton) followed up in detail the making of these lists from the time the assessor goes around until they come before the county judge, but right there the hon. gentleman (Mr. Britton) stopped short. The hon. gentleman must know, as we all know, that the most important and vital spot in the whole franchise law of the province of Ontario, is just what takes place after the county court judge gets through with his work. Do we have a printed list then, as the hon. member stated. No, Mr. Speaker, we do not. After the assessor has handed over the roll to the clerk, and the clerk has sent out copies to those mentioned in the Act, do we have the voters' lists hung up in a public place so that the people can see whether or not they are entitled to vote after the revision before the judge? No, Sir, we have nothing of the kind. On the contrary, as was shown the other night by the hon. member for East Simcoe (Mr. Bennett) after the revision by the county judge, there are hundreds of names written in ink and without being numbered so that they cannot be compared or traced afterwards. The hon. member for East Simcoe (Mr. Bennett) made a strong argument in this regard. How easy it is for an evil-disposed person to get hold of these lists and write in a name if he wants to, and how easy it is for such an one to draw his pen through the name of a poli-