

when the Government, before appealing to the people, gave the franchise to a certain class of Canadian women—a class of women who were supposed to be easily carried away by the campaign the Government had in store for them—and refused it to others. I believe that such a thing must be prevented in the future. Any Government might otherwise be at liberty, under the pretense of settling great national or imperial questions, to select their own judges, to have their case decided by a sort of family jury. Certainly this must be prevented, and if this Act will be a means of preventing that I certainly shall waive all the objections which I should otherwise urge against it, and shall favour its passage in order that any future manipulation of the franchise may be done away with.

Mr. CAHILL: Why should there be any reference to the War-Time Elections Act in this Bill? As I understand the War-Time Elections Act, or that small part of it that is understood by any person, it disfranchised alien enemies at the last election and gave the franchise to women who were relatives of soldiers.

5 p.m. If this Act is to confer the franchise on women who are British subjects, what is the purpose of providing that the War-Time Elections Act shall apply? Is it with the view of disfranchising some of these women at a later date?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Without the enactment of this measure, under the War-Time Elections Act certain women only would have the right to vote. This Act is to be read with the War-Time Elections Act and if any by-election or general election should hereafter be held, under the War-Time Elections Act, all women as defined in this Bill would have the right to vote.

Mr. CAHILL: Is it not the intention of the Bill that all women shall have the right to vote?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Yes.

Mr. CAHILL: Then I do not understand how the War-Time Elections Act can in any way affect future elections held under this Act.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: The War-Time Elections Act by its terms is operative only during a certain period. While it is operative or after it is operative all women as defined by this measure are to vote. Therefore, this Bill is to be read as one with the War-Time Elections Act and is

[Mr. E. Lapointe.]

also to be read as one with the Dominion Elections Act, so that under whichever Act an election takes place, women as defined in this Act shall have the right to vote.

Mr. EULER: Does not section 2, which states that the Act shall be considered as one with the War-Time Elections Act, particularly call into operation that part of the War-Time Elections Act which disfranchises citizens of alien enemy birth naturalized within the last fifteen years? If so, are not the wives of those disfranchised citizens thus also disfranchised? The point I should like to make—in this one should have the sympathy of every member of the House, notwithstanding what took place at the last election—is that under this Act, with the Conscription Bill in force, the mothers of men who are fighting at the front in the Canadian army may be disfranchised. Under the War-time Elections Act it was provided that even those who were of alien enemy birth should not be disfranchised if they had a son at the front. I think it was provided that the son should not be of age at the time of the election, but I am not sure about that. Under this Act, unless it is amended, it is quite possible that those who have been called to the colours under the provisions of the Military Service Act may find that their mothers, although good Canadian citizens, will be disfranchised because they happen to be of alien enemy birth.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: It is not the intention of this measure to take the franchise from any one who would be entitled to it under the War-time Elections Act. My hon. friend asks further whether the provisions with respect to women who have sons serving at the front would apply also to women under this Bill. I shall make a note of that and inform my hon. friend at a later date.

Mr. BUREAU: If I understand this Bill aright, it is not the intention of the Government to give the women a wider franchise than the men have at present?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I am afraid that this Bill does go that length.

Mr. BUREAU: Of course, it is not because my right hon. friend threatened me the other day with the vengeance of the women's votes that I want to make this remark.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Oh, I did not threaten my hon. friend; I told him what might have been the result.