

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: That is quite true. But I understood the minister to be impressed by the contention raised on this side of the House that a British subject joining the Canadian forces in Great Britain might well be disqualified, and he promised further consideration. If it transpires eventually that the Minister of Justice will submit an amendment that British subjects, citizens of Great Britain, joining the Canadian forces in the United Kingdom, shall not exercise the franchise under this Bill, I should say that was quite a proper provision. But if he does that I think he is precluded from asking this House to accept the principle contained in this section. This section is, I think, out of harmony with the whole purport and spirit of the Bill. In order to make my point clear I must refer the committee to section 3. That clause is not before us, but really we should look at that in considering this clause. Subsection 2 of section 3 requires that a voter, on presenting himself, must state the electoral district wherein he last resided, during a restricted period at least. Then there is another provision to the effect that if he cannot state or specify a residence he shall be deemed an elector from such electoral district as he may indicate. Supposing he had never been in Canada prior to his enlistment. Imagine the case of his proceeding overseas the day after he enlisted. Theoretically at least he would not know the name of a single electoral district in Canada. Take a case put to me after six o'clock this evening by a member of this House whose next opponent is an officer commanding a Canadian regiment in France. Say that, of 1,000 men, 999 came from the colony of Newfoundland and the British West Indies, and that they did not know any of the electoral districts of Canada; it would be quite evident that they could not state the electoral district in which they resided continuously for a certain period in Canada, because they had never resided here. They could not indicate any electoral district to which they desired their vote allocated. What would be the consequence? They would be entirely under the domination of their commanding officer. I do not say that would happen, I have no fear whatever of any improper influence being exerted in the taking of these votes overseas. But I submit that, when you point out the possibilities for the exercise of improper influences, you thereby point out fundamental weak-

[Mr. Arthurs.]

nesses in the Bill, and we, as representatives of the people, seriously considering an important piece of legislation, are bound to take that into consideration.

I was rather impressed by the suggestion made by some hon. gentlemen opposite that the Canadian enlistments include a large number of Canadian born who, prior to the outbreak of the war, were residing in the United States. I think that case might be fairly met in some way or other. They were British subjects, they were Canadian citizens, and I think that it is quite a fair suggestion to make that, having returned to Canada, enlisting in the Canadian forces, that should be considered as tantamount to a return to Canada, and their training period should be considered as a period of residence to qualify them for registration under the Franchise Acts of the several provinces. That is a different proposition, however, from the case of men who never resided in Canada or whose parents never resided here. I suggest that an amendment should be prepared to meet a case of that kind, and I should be very glad indeed to support it.

Mr. ARTHURS: I think this argument might be divided into two parts; first, the man who enlists from a foreign country, and second, the British citizen who has joined the Canadian forces at some point outside of Canada. I consider that if these men were numbered they would be found to be very few indeed, and I would suggest that they might easily offset those men who under like circumstances might vote, for instance, in Nova Scotia. But, leaving that to one side—because I believe that there is perhaps something in what the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. A. K. Maclean) says and the Minister of Justice said something about accepting an amendment along that line—the other arguments he has put up do not appear to bear any weight, for various reasons. It has been said, I think by the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Pugsley), that these votes could be bunched in certain places, that these men could be forced to vote in certain named constituencies. I venture to say that there are thousands of men in any province in Canada today who cannot name the constituency in which they are living. This is equally true of the men overseas. There is a second suggestion. I know whereof I speak regarding Ontario, and I believe that it is true of many other provinces. We have part three of the voters' lists, or manhood suffrage registration. These men, workingmen in