

as he thinks of this being done by a good Liberal assessor and of having 126 Liberal names struck off the list or their admission refused; and, at the same time, I can believe that the hon. gentleman will writhe in agony to think that the Grit plot did not go through; because we only carried the riding by 124, so that if we had not been successful in nipping this nefarious plot in the bud the hon. gentleman's friends might have carried the riding. When the assessor was put in the box and placed under oath, he admitted that he had had names handed to him of men he did not know, whose place of residence he did not know, he knew nothing about them, but that prominent Liberals in the riding had handed him the names, and these names had been distributed hap-hazard here and there through the assessment roll. What was the idea? Why, to carry these from the assessment roll to the voters' list and leave to their friends in East Simcoe, if they had succeeded in getting the names on the list, to find on polling day men to fit the names, which is an old trick of theirs.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

Mr. BENNETT. When the House rose at six o'clock, and before that time, I had been devoting myself to two phases of the Franchise Act; firstly, that the preparation of the list under the Dominion Franchise Act was as free and as fair as any preparation of the voters' lists under the local legislatures and under the municipal councils; and I made this further claim, that it is impossible to have at any time a voters' list that will be perfect in its entirety. The hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) pointed to the fact that in some of the recent elections the voters' list used were compiled some two years or a year and a half before. Well, all I have to say in answer to that is that naturally it is utterly impossible to have a voters' list revised down to each day, or even down to each month, or down to each year; and if to-day an election should take place in any one of the four divisions of the city of Toronto, the result would be that they would vote on a list compiled in the year 1894; because in the cities under the local Act, there is a kind of registration in force which bring about the result I have mentioned, and the registration only takes place immediately prior to the election being held. Now, a few words as to the cost. I contend that under a preparation of the local voters' list in view of an approaching Dominion election, great interest would be evinced by both political parties, that the same interest that now attached to a Dominion revision would appear in the event of a local revision, and that being the case,

Mr. BENNETT.

there would be cast an expense of at least \$1,000 on each riding, or an aggregate of \$213,000 odd for the whole Dominion, which would not come out of the Dominion exchequer, but would come directly out of the municipalities. As I pointed out prior to six o'clock, a great deal more expense is occasioned in revising a local voters' list than is occasioned in revising a Dominion voters' list. Now, I am free to admit that to pay \$213,000 for a revision of the Dominion voters' list, is a matter to which every importance should be attached; but at the same time I do not believe that every principle of fair-play should be dependent upon what it would cost; and I may repeat here what I have said before in this House in a discussion of the Franchise Act, that if the local municipalities are not prepared to afford that spirit of fair-play that should be afforded to all classes of the electorate, this Parliament should fight to the bitter end any attempt to take away that right of citizenship, because the right of voting is the dearest right of citizenship to every elector. Now, suppose for instance, that to-day in the province of Nova Scotia there was to be an assumption of the local list rather than the Dominion list; the result would be, and hon. gentlemen opposite know it full well, the deprivation of a large number of electors of the right of recording their votes at a parliamentary election. Take the case of Annapolis county which, I understand, is represented by the Attorney General of Nova Scotia, Mr. Longley. That gentleman was successful in carrying that riding for the local election; and why? Because he was able to deprive a large number of Dominion employees of their votes, but when it came to a federal election and all men had a right to vote in that constituency, the hon. gentleman suffered a defeat at the hands of the hon. member who represents that riding in this House. So you can go from one province to another, and the voters' lists have been and are used to-day, not to afford fair-play but rather to secure at all times and at all hazards a party advantage. Now, Sir, as has been pointed out in the course of the debate on the Franchise Act this session, there is no immediate requirement for the passage of this Act. The First Minister has announced that in all probability there will be no general election for four years to come, at all events; and in that view of the case, is it not better to postpone from the present time until a future session of this Parliament, any interference with the franchise as it exists to-day, and wait and allow the provinces to endeavour to assimilate their franchises and place them one and all on a common basis. Now, Sir, the feeling that the provinces are antagonistic to the Dominion, should be swept away, and it is not going to be swept away until they are shown the full responsibility that rests upon their shoulders. To the local legislatures