

tem of checks and counterchecks to hasty legislation. Therefore, so far as the central power is concerned, instead of weakening it, we should strengthen it by all honest and legitimate means in this Parliament.

Have said so much with regard to the Franchise Act itself, I wish to pass on to what the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) has said in commenting upon the remarks made by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Clancy) in this House a few nights ago. He stated that that hon. gentleman (Mr. Clancy) might not have been here had it not been for the present Franchise Act. The same might be said of dozens of hon. members on the other side of the House. In order to test the correctness of that statement, you would have to examine into the circumstances of every individual election held throughout the country, and you would find, I make no doubt, many of the hon. gentlemen upon that side of the House who, by energy and hard work were able to secure, perhaps, better lists than their opponent. Such has always been the case under the provincial lists, such has always been the case under the Dominion lists, such will be the case even if you come down to manhood suffrage and adopt a system of registration. The hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) a few days ago, hinted that there might possibly be a unanimity of opinion in favour of manhood suffrage. I shall have to change my mind before I agree to that principle, believing, as I do, that many of the evils which are now incident to the legislation not only of the United States but of England and of this country, are referable to the very low standard of property qualification that prevail in all these countries. But that is a matter that can be discussed, as it was in 1885, when the Bill is in committee of the whole House—it is a matter of detail. I have sought only to point out the danger that faces this Parliament when you come to enact legislation of this kind. Provinces will advance, provinces will change their franchises possibly for good, but possibly in directions that we would not approve in this House. But whether for good or evil, we are bound to affirm them; by this Act they will become the law of the land.

Now, just one word more with regard to what the ex-Finance Minister dwelt upon so long, the fact that this measure was brought forward for a certain purpose, that it was brought forward in advance of the legislation to which the country was earnestly looking forward. Now, Sir, I wish to join my voice with his in expressing my regret that the Government has not been able to bring down their measure of tariff reform, or tariff changes, at an earlier period in the present session. Sir, I sympathize with the Government, and acknowledge that the task they have undertaken is not a light nor an easy one. It is the

Mr. WOOD (Brockville).

most difficult work, perhaps, that a Government could undertake. Nevertheless, they have had opportunities, I think, beyond those that were enjoyed by the late Government prior to the legislation of 1894; they have had all the opportunities of going about the country and visiting the different industries, which was a right and proper thing to do, although they found much fault with us because a commission, of which I was a member, did the very same thing before bringing down the tariff revision of 1894. I can only say this, that I cannot believe that this measure was of sufficient importance to be interposed before the production of the more important tariff measure. I venture the prediction that this measure will scarcely be made law during the present session of this Parliament; and I rejoice to know that the circumstances of the country, the exigencies of party, the state of opinion in this Parliament, are not likely to render it necessary that the Government should bring down any such law during the present session.

Mr. CHARLTON. It is refreshing to have one of the leading members of the Opposition side of the House rise and direct his remarks to a discussion of the measure before the House. With the exception of, perhaps, the slightest and most casual reference to this question, we have had nothing from that side of the House with regard to the repeal of the franchise law. The hon. member for Brockville (Mr. Wood) has attempted to show reason why the Parliament of Canada should continue to exercise the functions that it took upon itself in 1885, to provide for this Dominion a voters' list. I think that the verdict of this country will be, I think that the verdict of this House will be, that the Government now occupying the Treasury benches, in deciding to sweep this measure from the Statute-book, is acting in the public interest, and will be entitled to receive, and will receive, the thanks of the public. My hon. friend from Brockville attempts to impress upon the House the idea that the repeal of the franchise law of this Dominion and the substitution in place of it of the franchises of the provinces, will work inequalities of the most striking and pernicious character. He tells us that in the province of Ontario, if the elections are held upon the list of that province, and in accordance with the election laws of that province, we shall have the principle—I may say parenthetically the salutary principle—of one man one vote; while, on the contrary, in the province of Quebec, and perhaps in other provinces, that principle will not apply; and for that reason we shall have a law which is not uniform in its application or in its operation with regard to the elections throughout the Dominion. But the very next moment the hon. gentleman goes on to say that when this law was adopted in