

men, during several sittings of the House, have offered this measure which, however, cannot fail meeting public approval. Let them go on, as long as they please, opposing so just and opportune a measure; such a course cannot but help our cause before the country. The Act now in force has often been discussed before the electorate, and I may say, speaking for the province of Quebec, that it has been condemned as formally as possible at the hands of the people. As a matter of fact, never did public opinion declare itself more openly on any important measure than it has done with regard to the franchise law of 1885. Many a time at public meetings and on the hustings did I hear that law inveighed against and denounced, but never yet have I heard any of our opponents utter a single word to vindicate it; on the contrary, they would confess, by their silence at least, if not by word of mouth, that it ought to be repealed. And no later than to-day did we not hear the hon. member for Pontiac (Mr. Poupore) stating in this House that he had pledged himself before his electors to vote in favour of any Bill to repeal the franchise Act of 1885? It was on good ground, therefore, that I stated, at the outset, that by opposing during several sittings the measure now under consideration the hon. gentlemen opposite were rendering us a service. Those hon. gentlemen have thought the best they could do was to have an amendment proposed to the Bill by one of their friends, but it is a spiritless amendment, to say the least, as it only tells us that this House is anxious to reduce the expenses attendant upon the preparation of the voters' lists, so far as may be practicable, while, it adds, no system of franchise would be satisfactory which did not preserve federal control. Such is the opinion given expression to by the majority of the hon. gentlemen. All those, at least, to whose speeches I have listened to, have declared that the expenditure attendant upon the preparation of the electoral lists were too large and even exorbitant. Now, the hon. gentlemen were in power at the time, and they ought to have found some means of reducing that expenditure. The hon. Solicitor General (Mr. Fitzpatrick), when introducing this Bill, told us that the four revisions of the electoral lists had cost the country \$1,154,000, which represents an average of \$288,000 for every revision. Now, if we refer to the expenditure incurred for the last revision which took place in 1894-95, we see, by the reply given by the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster) on the 12th February, 1896, that the last revision cost no less than \$235,396.98. It is quite evident therefore, that, experience did not teach them how to reduce the expenditure attendant upon the preparation of those electoral lists. Moreover, if we glance over the procedure which the revising officers had to go through, it is easy to understand that it could not be done without a large

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expenditure, and, moreover, a useless one, as we have in each province, voters' lists that are prepared by the municipal councils. Those lists are prepared yearly by competent men, chosen irrespective of party politics; they will also, as a rule, give better satisfaction, as they are more easy of access to the interested parties. The case is quite different with the lists prepared by the revising officers appointed by the Dominion Government, and belonging exclusively to one political party. Those officers strongly sympathise with the political party from which they get their appointment and, moreover, as they are often called upon to act in localities they are unacquainted with, they have to rely upon the information their political friends supply them with.

It seems out of question that the electoral lists of the different provinces, being prepared every year, without our having to concern ourselves about them, they would give fuller satisfaction than the Dominion lists can. As a matter of fact, under the Dominion Franchise Act, the expenditure necessarily involved is so large that it has led to the still worse effect of preventing the Government of the day, as also the former Administration, to revise yearly the electoral lists, as provided by the law now in force. What are the actual facts, Sir? Whenever any by-elections are coming off, we have to take lists four years old. This is an intolerable state of things, one that constitutes a real hardship for the voters whose names are not on the lists. Under the present system, a yearly revision would involve too large an expenditure. Therefore we cannot secure fair and equitable lists, without incurring heavy expenditures, whilst it would be quite otherwise, should we use the lists prepared for provincial elections. It is also contended that it is necessary to maintain the present system on the plea that it secures a much desired uniformity. I agree that the preparation of the voters' lists based on different systems may be attended with some inconveniences; but it should also be borne in mind that the provincial lists are prepared by municipal councils, being thereby less liable to lead to mistakes and to hardships than the present lists are. I am sorry, however, that the hon. Solicitor General (Mr. Fitzpatrick) has not seen his way clear to insert in the Bill now under consideration a provision by which the right of suffrage of an elector would be restricted to his place of residence. All those who have had to run an election know all the inconvenience of bringing to the polls persons who do not reside in the locality where they are qualified to vote. Those inconveniences are of such a nature as to justify the hon. Solicitor General, if he can see his way clear to do it, in amending his Bill, when it comes under the consideration of the committee, so as to make it provide for residential voting. Every hon. member in this House knows all the trouble and expenditure in-