

is one vast advantage. Even supposing the revising officer himself to have been reasonably impartial when the actual question of admitting or rejecting a vote came before him, it was in the preliminary work of compiling the list and putting men on, whom the other side had to appeal at great cost to get off, leaving men off whom the other side had to appeal at great cost to put on—it was in these preliminary measures that the party in power had a vast advantage under that Act; and how great it was, many of us know to our cost.

The hon. gentleman says that this Act was sustained by the electorate of the country because, in 1887, when, as he correctly says, it was a leading issue, the Government was sustained. Does that prove anything? Sir, if you pack a jury and then appeal to that jury to say whether they were fairly constituted, what answer are you going to get from the jury? If you have a Franchise Act which packs the electorate of this country in favour of a particular party and Government, what answer are you going to get from that electorate when you appeal to them at the polls? The fact that the electorate voted on lists, packed as they were, to sustain the Government that passed that law, shows nothing in favour of the law, but is one of its severest condemnations. In 1891 the election was fought on other lines, not chiefly on this, as the hon. gentleman said, though this was one of the issues, but the same packing of the electorate continued then, and continued in 1896.

Why should we as a Government and a party wish to surrender these great advantages when we come into power? It may seem to be asking the House to believe a great deal, but we ask the House to believe that those who have suffered so long from the injustice of the Franchise Act do not wish to inflict that injustice on others.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. CASEY. Hon. gentlemen opposite seem to be bound by some idea of consistency to stand up for a system that would oppress them. We propose to avoid the expense of correcting the lists, and we know what hon. gentlemen opposite would suffer if we chose to use this machine as it was used before. I do not say that poor, weak human nature does not urge some of us to press on the Government the propriety of retaining the old Franchise Act for a few years and giving hon. gentlemen opposite a dose of their own medicine. I believe that to be the inward feelings of a good many unregenerate hearts on this side of the House; but, having seen in Opposition that the Act was unfair and unjust, we have sufficient sense of consistency to compel us to stand by the promise we made in Opposition, and repeal this iniquity. When we were fighting this law by private subscription to raise funds necessary to cor-

rect the lists, we knew what power the other side possessed. We had no rich contractors at our back, we had no appointments to make.

An hon. MEMBER. You are all right now.

Mr. CASEY. An hon. gentleman says we are all right now.

An hon. MEMBER. What about the Yukon?

Mr. CASEY. No doubt the Government might now obtain favours from contractors. If we had contractors at our back who were prepared to advance funds, we would be in better shape to run elections than we have been for eighteen years. With all those funds supposed to be available, the powers given to us by the Franchise Act, the advantage of being able to raise money without putting our hands in our own pockets, as the hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. Bennett) has said—what could we not do to hon. gentlemen opposite at the next elections? We could make them a corporal's guard. But consistency, propriety and a sense of justice have compelled the Government, aided by their supporters, to throw aside the Act and revert to the old constitutional law of Canada. New-comers into Dominion politics, like the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Clancy) may forget that we have carried on elections for this Parliament under provincial franchises for a much greater number of years than we have carried on elections under the Dominion franchise. The wisdom of the fathers of confederation thought that difficulties might arise from the attempt to arrange and carry out a uniform system for the whole Dominion. They provided that in the meantime the provincial franchise should be used. From 1867 to 1885 it was used, and used to the satisfaction of every one concerned. In 1885, for a party purpose, which was thoroughly carried out by the event, a change was made to a uniform Dominion franchise, and the change involved the one element which I think is fatal to a franchise of that kind. My own theoretical preference is for a uniform Dominion franchise, if it could be obtained without most serious disadvantage. But no such franchise can be obtained unless we place the compiling of the lists in the hands of Dominion officials.

Mr. CLANCY. Is not the hon. gentleman raising the question for himself of a uniform franchise?

Mr. CASEY. My theoretical, individual and personal opinion—I do not think I can make it clearer to the hon. gentleman—would be in favour of a uniform franchise for the Dominion, if it could be had without serious disadvantage. As the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Clancy) has pointed out, no such franchise can be enforced ex-