

the polls; that it was a question of their rights and privileges, more important far than my personal election or non-election. You remember the Apostle Paul, when he was brought before the Jewish Judge and he claimed that he was a Roman citizen and demanded to be taken to Rome. The Jewish Judge said "With a great sum obtained I this freedom." But Paul answered, "But I was free born." We were free born; but our forebears were not, and many of them for generations fought and struggled and shed their blood, and died, to get this simple common everyday right of the ballot. I told the people that in the election, and I think they appreciated the situation and responded on election day.

I surely can be absolved of any charge of endeavouring to make a stump speech or of theatrical action when I state, simply and quietly, that surely, if it is not the fundamental right, it is a fundamental right of the Constitution under which we live to-day that a qualified voter shall have a free and untrammelled opportunity to exercise his franchise on election day, without such an unreasonable objection as having to lose his job or to lose the day's work being involved, and that the election should be held in such a way that every body of men, no matter whom they intended to vote for, should be allowed fully and freely to exercise that right. I do not think I am going beyond reason and—modesty, I was going to say—when I say that is a fundamental right. If that fact is conceded, then the Liberal party who are in power here, if they are conscious or even pretend to be conscious of their responsibility to maintain those rights for us, must surely realize that it is their bounden duty to strike this act off the statute books as soon as possible.

Mr. E. M. MACDONALD (Pictou): Mr. Speaker, I desire to extend to you my congratulations upon your election to the high office in which this House has placed you; but in doing so, as an old friend and associate in political life, I want to express the regret that all your colleagues, and, I am sure, all hon. gentlemen in this House who had the opportunity and pleasure of sitting with you in other Parliaments, feel, on account of the fact that your eloquent voice will no longer be heard in advocacy of those principles for which you stood during your long political career. I hope, in other days, and, perhaps, under different conditions, it may be that you, Sir, will be

[Mr. Macdonald (Pictou).]

able to give to your country and your party that same splendid assistance which you have given in times past.

I desire to express my appreciation—and I am sure I can voice the feelings of most hon. members—at the very interesting contribution to this debate just given by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill). His coming into this House of Commons means a distinct addition to this Parliament, and we shall look forward with interest in the future to the ease and grace with which he approaches the consideration of public matters and expresses his views with reference to them. As one who has had the honour of sitting in three previous Parliaments, I may be permitted to say that I am sure that in none of those previous sessions have we ever been favoured by the addition of so many new members who have been able to present their views to the House and the country with the confidence, ease and ability that hon. gentlemen who have spoken in this debate for the first time have displayed. That remark applies to all portions of the House. This is an important time in the history of this country, and the ability, which unquestionably has been added to Parliament as a result of the last contest, has not been exceeded in our experience since Confederation. The problems that face this Government and this Parliament are the gravest that any public men have had to deal with since 1867, problems and conditions created very largely as a result of the destruction of political ideals by the Union Government which was formed in 1917, created by the opportunist policy which characterized the administration in the four years in which they interfered with public life and public business of this country. The result on December 6 was a notification to the right hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) that this country was sick and tired of Toryism masquerading under the title of the National Liberal and Conservative party. The very use of a name of that kind by my right hon. friend or those associated with him indicates their rank insincerity, because those of us who had the pleasure of sitting in previous Parliaments with my right hon. friend knew that if ever a hide-bound Tory came into Parliament, it was my right hon. friend; and I was amused at his attempt, by assuming a sort of dulcet tone, to lead hon. gentlemen who sit on his left, who have come into this House for the first time, into the belief that, after all, he was not a Tory,