

been adopted, it had not been done away with.

This House, in the first session of 1873, by a very significant vote, adopted the principle, so much so that the late Government amended the bill they had introduced by including the ballot system. Of course there were many different modes of voting by ballot. One of them was that which secured the absolute secrecy of the votes of the electors. Such was the principle, he believed, in New Brunswick, in Nova Scotia, and in the Australian provinces. The system of voting by ballot adopted in England, however, was a little different. In the event of a contestation they could ascertain, by the machinery adopted, how certain of the electors had voted. This was done with the view of preventing personation. The Government, however, on comparing the two systems, had given preference to the one by which absolute secrecy was secured.

He had given the two systems a good deal of consideration, and he might say that in Upper Canada the English system had just been adopted. It might therefore be well that they in the Dominion should adopt the other system so that experience might show in a few years which system was the best, and that system might then be adopted.

Another point of importance was that respecting the franchise of electors. The question which arose in the settlement of this matter was whether they should adopt a uniform franchise for every Province; that was, fix a franchise that should prevail in all the Provinces in the election of members to the Dominion Parliament, or whether the Provinces should be allowed to fix the franchise which would be most convenient for them, and which would secure them a proper representation in the House of Commons. The adoption of a uniform franchise would entail considerable expense and difficulty in providing for the making out of the necessary lists.

The Government had come to the conclusion that it would be better to allow each Province to select their own franchise. (*Hear, hear.*)

It might be said against the first system that a uniform franchise might not be equally convenient in all the Provinces. What might be a good franchise in one Province might not be a good franchise in another, on account of the difference of wealth, assessments, et cetera. In the different Provinces they had a franchise for the cities, and another for the counties. It was considered, on the whole, that the franchise in cities and counties ought not to be exactly the same, as the means, wealth and education of the electors of some localities were greater than in others. In one or two Provinces almost the only qualifications necessary to the exercise of the franchise was manhood, and if this were made the uniform system it would create a franchise to which the people of the other Provinces had not been accustomed and which would be distasteful to a large proportion of them. Therefore, it was thought better to adopt the machinery and the lists provided by the Local Legislature. This, it was considered, was more likely to satisfy the people of the several Provinces, as a uniform suffrage would, no doubt, deprive a good many electors of the franchise they now exercised.

The franchise adopted by the Local Legislatures had been adopted in this bill with one exception, namely the Province of Prince Edward Island, for in that Province they had no electoral lists

for the elections to the Local Legislature. As, however, the necessary lists were employed in elections to the Legislative Council, that system as applying to the Upper House had been adopted.

He concluded by moving for leave to introduce the bill.

Hon. Mr. CAUCHON thought that the ballot would be a great boon to the people.

With respect to property, the case was different here from what it was in England, where as a rule, candidates were men of wealth. He was not going, however, to oppose a trial of the non-property qualification. He was in favour of the abolition of nominations, which would save in many places a great deal of useless expenditure, as under that system candidates were induced to make a show in order to tell upon the minds of the people, while their antagonists, who might not be so well able to compete with them in a pecuniary way, were often obliged to resort to dishonest practices. He did not think the Government would insist on ten as the number of voters sufficient for a candidate, as the object was not to have an election when there was no need for it.

There were two causes which brought about an election when there was no desire on the part of a constituency to have one. One man might get the required number of votes for a candidate for the purpose of making the candidate spend some money. A good many of that mentality, or rather morality—(*Laughter*)—would put the whole country in a turmoil because they wanted an election for certain purposes of their own. If a candidate could not find one hundred men in his constituency to vote for him that man ought not to be a candidate at all. The interest of the Returning Officer was often another cause of elections, and he would suggest, to meet this, that the salaries of the Returning Officers should be fixed, that he should receive the same salary whether there was an election or not, so that he would have no inducement to promote a contest.

He thought, now that communication was so rapid with certain constituencies in which the election had formerly been held later than in the other counties, there might be a change made in this respect. For instance, in the County of Saguenay the election should have taken place some time before it did, and he thought that the elections in Bonaventure and Gaspé could have taken place at the same time as the others. In Manitoba, or in constituencies further west, there might be some difficulty in having elections as early as elsewhere, but with these exceptions they could, he thought, be all held on one day.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON expressed the great gratification which he felt at the promptitude with which the question of the ballot had been brought forward. The leading points of the bill, as explained by the Hon. Minister of Justice, met fully the expectations of that side of the House, and would be acceptable to both sides and to the whole country. The principles of that bill had been promoted in that House for the last ten years, and in advancing these principles for which they had so long struggled, the Government gave them proof of the sincerity of their zeal.

Mr. JONES (Halifax) said that it would be extremely gratifying to his constituency to learn that a measure which had been already