

tion of the franchise as it ought to be studied and discussed and frame a law which will meet the necessities of the case. Let me point out one or two objections which occur to me at the moment. The first is that this Bill gives the provinces control of the franchise for this Dominion. The hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) argued that that was perfectly correct.

He declared that the provinces should control. Why? Because, he said, we come here to represent certain ridings, which ridings are part of the province, and therefore the provinces should make these lists. I think he should have carried the argument a little further. He should have gone on to say that these provinces are part of the Dominion, and therefore the Dominion should prepare the franchise for the provinces, and not the provinces for the Dominion. I think that that is a perfectly legitimate argument from the premises laid down by the hon. gentleman. I think it would be more reasonable that the supreme authority should frame the franchise for the provinces than that the provinces, which have inferior jurisdiction, should frame the franchise for this last court of appeal in the Dominion. It is a very strange objection, to my mind, this taking from the Dominion the control of the franchise and placing it with the provinces.

Another point is made with reference to one man one vote. Personally I should be very glad to see that principle incorporated in the Franchise Act; but, as was well pointed out to-day, we would not have that all over the Dominion, but we would have it in one province and not in another. But there is one great objection, to my mind, to passing this measure, and that is the temptation that would be offered the provincial governments to use this franchise for party purposes. Now, it has been urged as a very strong objection to this Franchise Act which we have at present, that the Dominion Government used it for party purposes. But I ask, what would be the difference between the Dominion Government using the Franchise Act for party purposes and the provincial governments using it for party purposes? Of course it is said that the provincial governments are too honest to do such a thing, but that the Dominion Government is not honest enough to be depended upon to resist this temptation. I hold that the Dominion Government is as honest as the provincial governments.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. CRAIG. I say that regardless of what party is in power. I am willing to grant that the Government in power here is as honest as the provincial governments. Not only that, but while we have one Dominion Government which might be tempted in this way, we have a great many pro-

vincial governments, and, I may say without slander, that some of them have not shown themselves above using the franchise for party purposes. I take it that it would not be hard to find cases where that has been done. And the objection is a very strong one, because when this is done we have no redress. Another great objection is that under some of the franchises existing under provincial laws a great number of citizens are disfranchised. They were disfranchised at a time when it was supposed they would vote for the Conservative party. I do not know whether, in committee, any arrangement will be made to give these men votes, but if this were done, it would show clearly how unfairly this Act could be used. Men employed on the Intercolonial Railway in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, men earning, perhaps, a dollar a day, were deprived of their franchise because they were in the employ of the Government, and because, I suppose, it was assumed that if they voted they would vote Conservative.

Mr. MACDONALD. The same in Prince Edward Island.

Mr. CRAIG. Just so, and I think this is a very strong objection. If the franchise were framed in this House no hon. member would stand up and advocate the disfranchisement of men because they earned a dollar or a dollar and a half a day working on Government railways or in any capacity under the Government. These men have as good a right to vote as I have. I have mentioned these cases merely to show that provincial governments would have the opportunity of using the franchise for party purposes, and might deprive men of their votes for the benefit of their party.

My conclusion is that the Government should leave this whole question of the franchise over to next session. I maintain that they have ample work to do this session, and I say, further, that this is not a pressing matter. There is no need for a new Franchise Act just now. We have no hope on this side of the House—at least speaking for myself personally, I have no hope—of putting hon. gentlemen opposite out of office for three or four years, when the next general election comes on. I do not know why there should be such a hurry to have this Bill passed unless gentlemen opposite are afraid that they will not be able to agree and the Government will split to pieces before long. Looking from the outside, it seems to me that they ought to be able to hang together for three or four years. This being so, there is no need for this Franchise Bill. If we take it up next session, we shall have had time to consider it. It was a good thing to introduce it this session, in order that hon. members may have the opportunity of considering the matter. If it is possible to lay aside party feeling and frame a Bill for the bene-