

moment, because in that case the measure which was introduced was to take the preparation of the list from municipal officers and to place in the hands of men appointed by the government of the day.

Now Sir, passing to another view, not far, however, removed from this one, may I be permitted to say that personally I think my vanity is somewhat flattered by the course which the debate has taken. My vanity is somewhat flattered because the debate has shown that my poor utterances, delivered from time to time in this House, have been diligently scanned and scrutinized by hon. members on the other side of the House. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) and my hon. friend from Prince Edward (Mr. Alcorn) have given evidence by their utterances that they have consumed some of the midnight oil in perusing what I may have said on this question from time to time in order to obtain an expression of opinion in favour of the view which they support at this moment. And in the accomplishment of this task, they have, I submit with all humility, but with sincerity, shown more ingenuity than ingenuousness. Everybody knows how misleading it is to take a sentence from a speech or from a writing of any kind without any reference to what precedes or follows, and how the man who is quoted may be thereby made to say the very reverse of what he meant. To give an example, a single example, upon this question, I will recall the speech of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition in which he made this quotation from a speech of mine delivered in 1898. In 1898 I spoke as follows :

But I would not have hesitated to accept the franchise provided by a Conservative legislature in Quebec, because, though there were many things in that franchise, on the whole, to which I would have objected, still as it satisfied the province it would have satisfied me. It is in the same way as regards other provinces. It is possible that the control of the several provinces may pass into the hands of the Conservative party; still on a question of this kind I am quite disposed for my part, to accept the franchise prepared by the legislature, whether Liberal or Conservative.

There the quotation ended. The same quotation was made the same night by the hon. member for Prince Edward and there also the quotation ended. Now, Sir, if my hon. friend the leader of the opposition had read a little farther he would have found that that sentence was qualified and singularly qualified in view of the present debate. By this quotation the effect is attempted to be produced in the House and to be produced in the country, where thousands of copies of the speech of my hon. friend are sent broadcast, that I affirmed that under all circumstances, without any

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exception, the provincial lists ought to be adopted. But, if my hon. friend and if the hon. member for Prince Edward had read the sentence immediately following, the House would have heard this :

But, if the day comes when a fraud is committed against this parliament, when legislation of a hostile character is brought forward in the legislatures, then it will be always open for this parliament to resume its own powers, and to enact a franchise law of its own.

My hon. friend the leader of the opposition and my hon. friend from Prince Edward also quoted extensively from the opinions delivered in that debate by the then Solicitor General, Mr. Fitzpatrick, but as far as I know and as far as I have been able to find in their speeches, I do not see this quotation, I do not see this expression of the Solicitor General.

The principle of the whole Act—

Said Mr. Fitzpatrick on that occasion.

—is that we intend to adopt the provincial franchises as the basis of the franchise for the Dominion. That is our intention. It is idle for my hon. friend to assume, or to suppose that we assume, that the provincial franchises existing to-day will continue for all time. I cannot follow the argument of hon. gentlemen on the other side who say that we dispossess ourselves of control over our franchise. We do not do anything of the sort; we simply adopt for the present the franchises of the provinces. But if at any time the provinces should do anything that we consider detrimental to the interests of the Dominion, we are entirely free, we do not tie our hands for all time, to make any change that we think proper. We do not dispossess ourselves of our control over the franchise.

Mr. FOSTER. What page is that ?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That is on page 3952 and the preceding quotation is at page 4015. And yet, it is difficult to believe that my hon. friend from Prince Edward and my hon. friend the leader of the opposition did not read these sentences, or did not see them. If they tell us that they did not see them it will be a sad comment upon their diligence, and if they tell us that they saw them it will be a sad comment upon their fairness. Neither did I see any quotation of an expression in the line which I have just stated and which was delivered upon the same occasion. An hon. member of the House, in that same debate, spoke as follows :

My hon. friend (Mr. Fitzpatrick) will suggest to me, I suppose, that if the provincial legislatures alter their enactments from time to time we have the power to correct those enactments so far as they are applicable to elections to this parliament; and I concede that at once to be the case; but what does that amount to? It means simply that we have to keep a watch over the principal legis-