

minion Government through the payment for services which is presumably the reason why they are weeded out in the provinces. I have gone barely through the list of disfranchisements that will take place. Why do they take place? Solely because the right hon. leader of the Government feels that the easiest way for him to get out of a piece of perplexing legislation is to shunt off all responsibility for it and leave it to the different provinces, no matter what the principle or methods may be, as far as the provincial franchises are concerned. It requires some brains, some backbone, some mental struggle to bring down a franchise measure and put it through this House for the election of members to this House, and face the varied oppositions which will take place, and make a good law. It is no child's play to make such legislation, and my hon. friend does not propose to undertake it. He sets up a theory which no man in this Dominion but himself can or would attempt to justify, namely, that by constitutional right the franchise of this country should be in the power of the local authorities instead of in the power of this Parliament. He sets up this fantastic doctrine, because he sees that the easiest way is to shove all this troublesome thing off to the local legislatures and have no trouble with it here at all. Simply because we are members of Parliament and a gentleman outside just as good is not, does not give us the right to take away that man's citizenship without good reason. What right have we, because we happen to have the accident of power on our side, to say that he shall no longer be a full citizen? He is performing all his duties, he has not sinned against the moral law or the law of his country, he is a good citizen and an intelligent man, yet simply because by the accident of our being here and having a majority, and because the right hon. gentleman chooses to set up a theory for which there is no foundation, we reserve ourselves the right to take away this man's citizenship. The thing is monstrous. That word is not too strong to characterize such action.

What is the ground on which it is contended that the local government should have the power of fixing the franchise? Where do they get that power? Not in the constitution of this Dominion, for in that constitution it is expressly laid down that the establishment of the franchise shall be within the powers of this Dominion Parliament. If that power were exercised for nineteen years by the local legislatures, it was so exercised by permission of that constitution by permission of this body which has the power, because it is enacted in the constitution that until the Dominion Parliament fixed its basis of franchise, the provincial franchises should be accepted. Five months after confederation was established, this Dominion Parliament—if it had not had more pressing work to do may be, or work that it thought was more pressing to

go on with—could have exercised this right for the whole period of confederation. It allowed instead that right to be exercised by the local legislatures, but when the fulness of time came, it took to itself its own undisputed constitutional right, and fixed the basis of its own franchise. Now, we are to go back simply because an hon. gentleman gets up and says: no matter what the constitution provides, I say that the right of fixing the basis of the franchise for this body belongs to entirely alien and different bodies, who move in different spheres and have different constitutional rights to exercise. Unless a better reason can be given, I make my protest against depriving citizens of the dearest right of citizenship. Is it a light thing to take away a man's franchise? I answer that question by asking another. What better, what more earnest, what more serious, what more bloody work was ever done in the world's history than the work of gaining the power of the franchise. Read the history of every country in its upward progress, and it is the history of its struggle for self-government, for the power to place upon the Statute-book, through its representatives, the views of the people with reference to the policy and the work of governing the country. That is the privilege for which the world has struggled, and it is no light thing to deprive any class of citizens, on a mere arbitrary opinion, of this dearly bought right. I protest against that. Every honest and justice-loving man, in this House will protest against it, and however he may vote, will wish that he did not have to do that.

The hon. member for Lambton (Mr. Lister) is not here, but in the course of the afternoon he was as brave as any man I have seen in this House for some time. He declared with the utmost freedom and conviction that he would not subscribe to the principle that by this enactment you should take away from any class the franchise they already enjoyed, and he stood up for the Indian. I sympathize with him for the Indian. Now if he will stand up full of sympathy and courage for the Indian, will he not stand up full of even greater sympathy and courage for the intelligent district magistrate, the intelligent customs officer, the intelligent clerk of the peace and the intelligent registrar in his country who, for his whole political life, has enjoyed his franchise, has given expression to his political principles, has read his political paper, has formed his political views, and has gone up to the consummation of all those to the poll and voted for his representative, and through his representative for his views upon the Government and the history of his country. The hon. gentleman entertains great sympathy for the Indian, who had the franchise given him a few years ago, will he have no word to say for the thousands and tens of thousands of intelligent and high-class white men who will be deprived of the franchise they have exercised