

House should preserve their mental and physical strength for the important duties yet before us. We all deplore that our hon. Finance Minister is incapacitated from business by severe sickness. It is reported that he will soon be called to another position, and will be appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of New Brunswick. Now I think there is not a member of this House that will grudge him that promotion and that dignity and leisure to which a life-time devoted to the public service fully entitles him. Common report says, whether correctly or not, that the hon. member for Cardwell (Mr. White) will be his successor. Now I want to submit for the consideration of the Committee that, when the hon. gentleman assumes the onerous duties of that responsible office, he will need have all his mental faculties and all his physical powers to conduct the finances of this country which are at present in a desperate state. Then there is the Deputy-Speaker whose duty it is to take the Chair in Committee of the Whole House—he also requires rest. I can say what I would not say before his face without flattery (he being absent at the moment) that members on both sides of this House, so far as we have observed his conduct in the Chair, will unite in saying that he conducts the business of the committee with ability, courtesy and skill. I see he is becoming exhausted, and is forced sometimes to retire. Then there is the Clerk of the House, who is so thoroughly well qualified for the position he fills, and who is so valuable an authority on Parliamentary procedure—all these gentlemen absolutely require rest at this moment, and for these reasons I urge upon the committee the propriety of adjourning. Another reason why I ask for an adjournment is, that the clause giving the franchise to Indians is one of such a revolutionary character that its consideration ought to be deferred. Now, the Liberal members of this House are all anxious to confer the franchise on Indians just as soon as they are fit to exercise it, but we contend that the great mass of them are not yet in that position. The Consolidated Indian Act already makes provision for enfranchising Indians who have attained to a certain degree of property qualification, and, if that Act is not sufficient to include all who are thus fitted, then let it be made broader. Then I submit that it will be a moral impossibility for nine out of the ten Indians who will be enfranchised under this Act, to understand how to use it. There are two languages in which the politics of this country are discussed, and how many Indians understand either of them? Consequently how can they understand the political question, or the principles of the candidates for whom they will be required to vote. Another difficulty lies in their want of intelligence. When a man comes up to vote he must be able to read the ballot so as to know whom he is voting for; but, as far as the Indians are concerned, we know that in not one case in twenty amongst the Indians of the North-West, will the enfranchised Indian be able to read his ballot, or to know where he should make his mark. Why, Sir, it would be almost an impossibility for the Indian agents or instructors to teach the enfranchised Indians sufficiently to enable them to understand even the meaning of the franchise. Lest the revising barristers should be unable to carry the Government into power, it has been decided to give the Indians votes, which they will exercise under it according to the wishes of the Indian agents. The hon. gentleman proceeded to read extracts from the reports of Indian agents in the Province of Nova Scotia. Those reports, the hon. member said, showed that in view of the distribution of the Indians throughout the different constituencies they would prove very useful to the Government as giving them a solid body of Indian votes in the different ridings. In Ontario it would have the effect of defeating, in all probability, the members for Haldimand, South Brant, West Lambton, Bothwell, and myself, for I have no less than 1,345 Indians

in my constituency. In the North-West the Indians are becoming more and more dependent on the Government, in consequence of the departure of the buffalo and the scarcity of game; and consequently they would be in no sense independent as regards exercising the franchise. I submit that this measure is revolutionary in its character and sweeping in its provisions, and it should not become law.

Mr. AUGER. (Translation.) Mr. Chairman, I did not expect to speak on the subject which is now before the House; but as the motion for the adjournment of the debate was not agreed to, I deem it my duty to say that it would be about time for us to go back home and rest ourselves. Mr. Chairman, you ought to understand all the importance of the Bill now before us, and for this reason, it is absolutely necessary for the members who are called upon to discuss this Bill, to be fully prepared. In the first place, Mr. Chairman, we must spare our strength, for we have more important measures which will soon be brought down, and I trust that the majority who hears me and the Minister of Public Works, will take into consideration the fact that the Opposition is not numerous, but that it is not lacking in importance, and that it is necessary at least to spare the health of its members. I believe it is their duty to note the fact that we are not all as strong as the Minister of Public Works, who enjoys very good health. That gentleman ought to consider that there are some among us who are weaker than he is and who have not the advantage of sleeping in their seats as he does, for I believe it is there he takes all his strength; he sleeps while the House is in Session. I believe this sitting has lasted long enough. We have been sitting for two days. I was here yesterday morning at about four o'clock when a motion similar to this was made. There was a long discussion, the Opposition offered to allow the adoption of the clause concerning persons. The Government in their wisdom, refused to do it. Well, are they better off to-day? Members of both sides of the House are tired out; for although the hon. gentlemen opposite have not said anything they also must feel tired. I believe the Government would do an act of justice by not compelling the House to sit permanently, and I trust that they will see their way of allowing this motion of adjournment to be adopted. I trust that they will not take advantage of their majority to kill the Opposition. For, after all, we are not having justice. If the hon. members opposite were willing to discuss as we do, we would then be on an equal footing, except that they would have the numbers in their favor. But, Mr. Chairman, you must have observed that they do not think it proper to reply to us, notwithstanding the fact that we have raised serious objections. The gentlemen who support the Government seem to think it unworthy of them to reply to us. I dare say, however, that there will be a tribunal before which they will be obliged to answer. It will be the people who will call them to account for their conduct. It is easy to see that it is not the Opposition who is obstructing, because yesterday morning we offered to allow this clause to be passed on condition that the House would adjourn, which was refused to us. We deem it our duty, as members of the Opposition, and as representatives of the people, to defend the interest of the people. We deem it our duty to stay in our seats to prevent the adoption of that measure, or at least to record our protest in order to show our people that we have done our utmost to prevent the passing of that iniquitous law. Mr. Chairman, this Bill is so monstrous that even those who are supporters of the Government are opposed to it to-day. We see that in the newspapers of the Province of Quebec. Take *La Vérité* for instance, which says that it is an anti-social and anti-Conservative Bill, that it is too radical. The other newspapers say the same thing. *La Vérité* even says that all the bishops of the Province of Quebec are against that Bill. Mr. Chairman, if those who support the Government