

hours, and it would take half-a-dozen Philadelphia lawyers to tell how he was going to vote on that question. We know how he did vote. He voted by leaving the Chamber. He would not vote on the question of female suffrage. On a motion made by Mr. Coyne, then member for Peel, in favor of female suffrage, the present leader of the Opposition said :

"He hoped the sober sense of the House, of the country and of the fair sex would be arrayed, as he believed it was, against the proposition."

Thus, so far as the franchise was concerned, he was not liberal enough to grant it to females or to a man with property only worth \$100. Then, on the 4th December, 1868, when the same Bill was under discussion, the leader of the Opposition used this language :

"He thought if hon. gentlemen had acted wisely they would have kept up the franchise in cities to \$500. Had they done so we would not have seen hon. gentlemen urging this downward course which this reaction sought."

So you will see that, while to-day they profess to be favorable to granting the franchise to a large body of the electors, they have systematically opposed a reduction of the franchise. I think I can satisfy the House that every reduction of the franchise that has been granted by the Reform party, was at the instance of the Conservative party, and only when the Reform party was driven into the last ditch. Now, Sir, we find that the organ of the party, at that time, had the same view upon this question. On the 27th November, 1868, we find this language :

"If he (Hon. J. S. Macdonald) would take the trouble to enquire as to the practical effect of his \$400 real estate franchise in Toronto, where it will include nearly all but the very poorest tenements, he would be able to see that he is enfranchising in this city alone, hundreds of persons who are, to say the least, no more worthy to be enfranchised than the class he resolutely excludes."

So that the House will see the organ was not favorable to giving the franchise to even the \$400 men. On the 11th December, 1868, it goes on to say :

"If there is any danger of our drifting to universal suffrage, that danger will be enhanced by a persistence in the palpable injustice of enfranchising nearly every householder and refusing to enfranchise anybody else no matter how worthy or thrifty. There are many persons who do not in the least favor universal suffrage, who still hold that it would, in cities at all events, be no worse than the present franchise."

Now, Mr. Chairman, I have seen over and over again, that the Reform party has claimed credit for the introduction of the income franchise. I am not accustomed to boast of what I have done in Parliament, but I assert that the first person who proposed the income franchise was the individual now addressing you. In 1868 I introduced a Bill into the Ontario Legislature, recognising the principle of the income franchise, and declaring at the same time that it should be extended to all university men, so that education should be represented as well as money. That did not meet with the favor of the House. Upon that occasion, in endeavoring to induce the House to accept the more liberal view, I made use of this language, as quoted by the *Globe* :

"For his own part, he would prefer that this matter be left over until a more comprehensive scheme could be adopted, by means of which not only those enjoying an income should have the right to vote, but also, that university men and others, who really take an interest in everything affecting the welfare and prosperity of this country should have some voice in choosing their representatives."

The House was not willing to accept the income franchise, and at the instance of the then member for Welland (Mr. Currie) the income franchise was struck out of the Bill. Those gentlemen came into power in December, 1871; they remained in power for a number of years, but they granted no extension of the franchise. In 1874, I introduced into the Ontario Parliament a Bill giving the franchise to men enjoying an income, and that Bill was taken up by the Government and passed just as I introduced it. While hon. gentlemen opposite claim credit for having been in favor of an income franchise, I can show that I was the one who first proposed it in the Local Legislature. Now, that

Mr. Rykert.

clause relating to the income franchise was encumbered by a clause requiring the payment of taxes by the 14th day of December. In 1877, Mr. Meredith tried to remove that feature of that franchise. There were hundreds of persons who would like to enjoy the franchise, but were not prepared to pay the taxes, because, at that time in Ontario, as well as at present, any persons having an income under \$400 were exempt from taxation; but they could not be placed upon the voters' list unless they were willing to be assessed and pay taxes. In 1877 Mr. Meredith moved that that obnoxious clause should be repealed, but his motion was rejected at the instance of the Mowat Government. In the year 1877 an agitation was got up in the Local Legislature of Ontario to give farmers' sons the franchise. Now, hon. gentlemen opposite claim that they are the champions of the farmer's son franchise. I have before me a quotation from their own organ, denouncing the franchise being extended to farmers' sons, and pointing out that they might just as well give it to the sons of mechanics and merchants as to farmers. On the 8th January, 1877, the organ said :

"If the farmer's son is to have a vote, why not anybody's son? If the farmer's son is to be enfranchised—who remains for convenience under the family roof—why is not the storekeeper's son, or the mechanic's son, or any other son for that matter, who follows the same laudable and political line of conduct to be disfranchised?"

It proceeds :

"And as every male person is the son of somebody, the real point to be decided is, what is there between giving a particular person a vote because he is a farmer's son and giving every male person a vote because he is the son of somebody not a farmer? In other words, what stands between the proposal and what is called, perhaps not very correctly, but popularly, universal suffrage?"

Now, Sir, in order to justify the legislature in not giving the franchise to farmers' sons, the organ quoted from Mr. Bright and said :

"Mr. Bright has always opposed 'fancy franchises' as merely colorable attempts to give manhood suffrage to those who did not dare to advocate it openly and honestly. Pretty hard that."

Now you will see that the farmer's sons franchise when first proposed in Ontario, was strongly opposed by the party organ. I have several articles before me in which it takes the same view, one of February, 1877, in which it says :

"But we have never heard yet a sufficient reason given why the farmer's son should be expressly selected for the enjoyment of the privilege while the son of nobody else is to be allowed to share it."

"But it is a bogus qualification nevertheless, a mere blind to hide manhood suffrage from view."

"It would be better to do in a direct manner what is thus sought to be attained in a circumlocutory fashion by this Bill. But then public opinion in this country certainly does not favor manhood suffrage or any departure from the old lines of the constitution."

Then it grew violent and a few days afterwards went on to say :

"We cannot, however, but reiterate that all which has been stated in its favor has not removed one objection to the measure which we have entertained. We still think that it is based on a wrong principle, that it is invidious, and by its very nature, can only be characterised as a piece of class legislation. We have never been able to see, nor has any of the supporters of the measure attempted to show, the reason for one man who is called a farmer, and who is possessed of twenty acres, having accorded to his son who works with him, and who may have the prospect of one day succeeding him, a vote in the election of municipal office-bearers and members of Parliament, while another man with ten acres, which with the help of a grown up son he cultivates as a market garden, and from which he raises three or four times more produce, should be denied the same privilege or honour, whichever it may be supposed to be."

"All over Ontario there is a large population of handicraftsmen who are socially, intellectually, and pecuniarily quite equal to the farmers among whom they live, and whose necessities they supply. These men are often, as far as their sons are concerned, exactly in the same position as their neighbours, the farmers. The tailor, the shoemaker, the grocer, the carpenter, and the blacksmith, to mention no others, have often one or more grown-up sons working with them on the same deliberately formed understanding as in the case of the farmers, that these sons shall succeed to the business when their fathers are laid aside either by sickness or death. Everyone who knows anything of the rural life of our country knows that as a class these young mechanics are equal to that class enfranchised by this measure."

Now, I point this out to show the House that while the