

all know, differently situated from any of the other provinces ; it occupies an exceptional position and enjoys special privileges, which privileges I consider are endangered by this Bill. Two members of this House, from the Province of Quebec, gentlemen who are known to be strong Conservatives, have found it necessary to rise and oppose this measure. The hon. member for DeLanaudiere (Mr. Bellerose) and the hon. member for DeSalaberry (Mr. Trudel,) and several others have taken alarm, and have separated themselves from their life-long political friends. They have exclaimed "Stop, here is a dangerous measure for our province !" In the other House the same spectacle was presented, and the reply which was made there, and which has been echoed with greater emphasis here by the hon. member from Niagara, is "This is obstruction." We are told that all the debating and criticism which took place on the measure in the other House was nothing but obstruction. But are those who raise that cry really sincere ? If the delay was due only to a policy of obstruction, why is it, that after the Bill had been referred to a Committee of the Whole in the House of Commons, the Government did not proceed resolutely with its measure ? What were the Government doing during nearly eight days after the Bill was reported from Committee ? Nothing. They should have pressed the legislative work, but they did nothing or next to nothing. Even if the Bill had not been of a most objectionable character, it would have been a strange spectacle indeed to see the House in session for weeks with little or no business before it. And why was this ? Because, as rumor says, (and I think well-founded rumor) it was necessary to continue the Session to the present day in order that the two Houses might be in attendance here to ratify the transactions which Sir Leonard Tilley has made in the English money market, on his return. That is why the Session has been prolonged, but it suited the Government better to publicly accuse the Opposition of prolonging the session by pursuing an obstructive policy, and to present them in an odious light to the public for a delay which, I contend, was inevitable, owing to the policy of the Government. Many members of both Houses knew that, and, of course, the Minister of Justice above all others, and

knowing it, I think he should have used his influence to prevent an unfounded charge being made against the Opposition. Do they call that fair play ? I leave it to the hon. member from Niagara to reply. He is generally near the Minister and well instructed. The fact of having succeeded in eliminating from the Bill a considerable number of objectionable features justified the Opposition in their energetic action, unless, as we are informed by the hon. member from Niagara, those objectionable clauses were inserted in the Bill for the sole purpose of giving the Government the extreme pleasure of striking them out afterwards. I leave the House to say what they think of such an argument.

HON. MR. POIRIER (in French)—Although the House is anxious to terminate the debate, I wish, before a vote is taken, to offer a few words in explanation of my position on this measure. In replying to the arguments of the hon. member from LaValliere (Mr. Paquet), I will at the same time answer those of the hon. member from DeSalaberry (Mr. Trudel). They have contended that the effect of this Bill will be to centralize power at Ottawa. If I understand the Bill properly it deprives no elector of the franchise ; everyone who has a vote to-day will continue to have a vote under this Bill, but the franchise will be extended, so far as the election of members to the Dominion Parliament is concerned. In the several provinces the local legislatures will continue to fix the franchise for local elections ; this Bill does not in any way interfere with the management of local affairs, but instead of municipal officers preparing the lists, as is the case now, officers will be appointed by the authorities here for that purpose. The voters here will be the same, the principle of election will be the same ; the only difference that this Bill makes, that I can see, is that instead of having the lists prepared by municipal organizations, they will be prepared by our own officers. While we leave to the provinces all the liberty they enjoy to-day, and while we do not interfere in the slightest degree with their rights, I cannot see any reasonable ground of objection to the measure, and I shall vote for it because I see no evidence in it of any tendency to centralization.