

going to enact a measure of that kind? I venture to say, with all deference to the Solicitor General (Mr. Fitzpatrick), who has had in charge the preparation of this measure, that no such law will ever be enacted in this Parliament during the present session at least. Well, Sir, that is only one illustration of the change that has taken place in the history of franchises in Canada. I say "franchises" advisedly, because in this Bill we are dealing with franchises of all kinds, and not the franchise of the Dominion alone. The principle upon which the legislation first introduced in this Parliament was based, was not, as some suppose, to obtain uniformity throughout the Dominion. Any one who doubts that I would refer to the speech of the late Sir John A. Macdonald, when he introduced the Franchise Bill in 1885. He stated that it was not on that account, but it was, that, though the provinces might differ in their franchises, nevertheless we in this Parliament had the power to say whether these should be the franchises of this Dominion. That is the great principle involved in the franchise of 1885. We know, Sir, that during the session of 1885 we adopted the franchise then existing in Prince Edward Island, we adopted the franchise then existing in British Columbia, though that franchise was manhood suffrage in each case. Though they differed from the franchise in Quebec or Ontario, they then became the Dominion franchise. It is not alone in the particular I have mentioned as regards the province of Quebec or Ontario, but in every respect we are subjected to any future changes that may be made by any legislature—which may be more advanced, if you like, as to the extension of the franchise. Whatever it may be, under this Bill we are bound to accept it as a matter of course. There are, in many of the provinces, people who believe, and believe honestly, in the principle of minority representation. Much may be said in favour of that principle. I am not prepared to say, so far as my humble opinion is concerned at least, that the day is not so very far distant when the principle may be adopted by provinces in this Dominion. If that day should arrive, we shall have no fault to find with the province adopting it, but it may not meet with the approval of the majority of this House and of this country. Nevertheless, under the principle of the Bill before us, we are bound to adopt it as the Dominion franchise for that province. We are subject, therefore, to all the changes—I will not say whims, because some of the changes may be good, some may be advanced, some may be, perhaps, ahead of the times in the Dominion yet not ahead of the time so far as the particular province is concerned—of the various provinces. But I am not prepared to say that some of the provinces will not act in this same high-minded spirit. We have had experience in the province of

Nova Scotia. We know that prior to an election, the men in the employment of the Dominion Government were disfranchised in order that they might not cast their votes at a Dominion election. But something has happened within the last ten days in the Ontario legislature alone which ought to make clear to all members of this House the danger of leaving our franchise at the mercy of hostile legislatures. About two years ago, I think it was, that legislature passed an Act limiting the powers of this Government to appoint junior judges, by fixing a limited population in the counties in this regard. The result was that that power was taken from the Federal Government. Within the last two weeks, in what may be the dying hours of the Ontario legislature, that law was repealed. Does any one suppose that it was repealed for any other purpose than to enable the Federal Government to appoint junior judges again? I merely mention that to show the danger of placing the franchises of this Dominion at the mercy of the provincial legislatures in this country. I could mention other cases than that. Sir, there is a great principle involved. This Franchise Act was not enacted without a very great deal of consideration. Not once, but on seven different occasions, did Sir John Macdonald introduce the Bill which was afterwards passed in 1885, and he did so, as he stated, in order that the measure might be before the country and be properly considered by the electors before it finally became the law of the land. I need not remind those hon. gentlemen who were in the House in 1885 of the full and complete discussion that took place upon the measure. We know that that period of obstruction, the first in the history of this Parliament under our present procedure, was inaugurated at that time by those who now occupy the Government benches in this House. We know that after the fullest possible discussion, lasting over a period of some months, this measure at last became law. No Bill was ever passed in this Parliament that received such criticism as this Bill received. No measure was ever enacted here of which it might be so truly said that it was made as perfect as such legislation could possibly be from a Dominion standpoint. And now shall it be said that we will take a retrograde step, that we will commit political suicide so far as this Parliament is concerned by giving up this right which is crystallized into an Act of Parliament and go back to provincial franchises with all their weaknesses and all their dangers? This is to be regretted not from the federal standpoint alone. I believe that the history of this country has shown that there is such a strong current of provincial thought that it is almost impossible for the Federal Government to resist it. In our provinces we have not the second chambers, as a rule, that they have in the United States; we have not the sys-