

ever experienced in his political life. And what was it that took place afterwards? As long as Sir George Etienne Cartier occupied a seat in this Parliament, the enormous influence which he exercised, not only on the members from the Province of Quebec but also on those from all the other Provinces, prevented the hon. First Minister from endeavoring to destroy Confederation in order to establish legislative union. But, for a few years back, from the time Sir George Etienne Cartier disappeared from the political arena, we have seen the ideas of the First Minister coming back with more force, and probably he will devote the last years of his life to the crowning of his dream, which is the legislative union of all the Provinces of Canada. The Province of Quebec, to which I have the honor to belong, cannot be in favor of the Franchise Bill which is now submitted to us, and I am convinced that most of the Conservative members who support the Government cannot approve of all the clauses contained in this Bill. In fact this Bill contains ideas which are essentially radical and essentially reactionary. I am happy to say that the Province of Quebec is neither radical nor reactionary. Among the radical provisions, I see the universal suffrage, or rather the tendency to universal suffrage, and among the reactionary provisions I find the appointment of revisers appointed by the Government; Mr. Chairman, can there be anything more radical than the woman suffrage contained in this Bill? So radical is that provision that it has not even been proposed by the French and Italian Radicals. I may be told that this provision has only been made by the hon. First Minister subject to the approbation of the House, and that it has been withdrawn by him; but if the majority had been in favor of woman suffrage, is it not true that that provision would have been imposed on the Province of Quebec which does not want it at all, and that the people of that Province would have been compelled to submit to it? What guarantee have we that even next year a member of this House will not rise from his seat and propose woman suffrage and universal suffrage? The moment the introduction of such a measure is permitted, the moment power is given to the federal power to legislate on electoral franchise, the door is open to all these abuses; and I repeat that if one of these radical measures is proposed by a member we will be obliged to submit to it, if it is supported by the majority of the House. I say that this Bill contains reactionary principles, and I find another proof of this in the Indian suffrage. I believe that in the United States where the dispositions of the Indians are well known, this provision of the Bill will be appreciated in a peculiar manner. I believe it will appear very strange that a civilised assembly like ours should vote in favor of the enfranchisement of Indians, who are under the guardianship of the Government, especially when it is found that special privileges are established for this class of individuals, privileges which are refused to the other electors of the Dominion. I spoke a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, of the appointment of revisers by the Government. The powers conferred on these revisers make this one of the most reactionary propositions which could be introduced in a Parliament. In fact, by these extraordinary powers the election of members is actually put into the hands of these revisers. So much so that a newspaper, speaking on the subject some time ago, said that it would be much more simple to give the revisers the right of appointing the members themselves, and thus save the expense of revising the lists. One fact is well known, Mr. Chairman, and it is, that if the voters' lists are between the hands and in the power of one of the two political parties, that party will be pretty sure of carrying the elections. It has been said that this provision of the revising barristers, was counterdrawn from the English law, but it has been proved, Mr. Chairman, that the English law does not contain any provision which might be compared to the provisions of this Bill which we are discussing to-day. In fact, the

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lists in England are prepared by assessors and these lists are afterwards revised, the revisers being appointed by judges; so that the Government has nothing to do with the assessors nor the revisers. This appointment of revisers by the Government is an encroachment on the privileges of the municipal councils. Until now, the lists have been prepared by the municipal councils, and I can affirm that nobody complained of that system. It is true there have been abuses, but there will always be abuses whatever system may be adopted. In the municipal councils the lists are prepared in a friendly way, so to speak; each elector goes to the municipal council and gets his name put on the list, if it should happen to have been omitted, or if there should be any irregularity; but with the exception of a few parishes in which there are occasional quarrels everything goes on smoothly. At the present time, the valuation is made by valuers appointed by the municipal councils. These men are farmers, and I have noticed that in my parish and in the neighboring parishes, great care is always taken to appoint as valuers people who enjoy public confidence and credit; these men are sworn, and I may say nine times out of ten their valuations are perfectly made. What will happen with the revisers who are to be appointed by the Government? These men will be advocates chosen in the cities, and I believe it is perfectly well established that the lawyers who will accept such a position as that, will not hold the highest rank in the profession. Indeed the best lawyers in the Province will not accept such a poorly remunerated position, which will give them such a large amount of work. These lawyers will be charged with the duty of valuating the properties and preparing the voters' lists. It has been pretended that they might use the valuation rolls prepared by the municipalities; but if that is the intention of the Government, why did they not accept the amendment which we proposed a few days ago, and the object of which was to compel the revisers to use the valuation rolls prepared in the municipalities. The fact that the Government declined to accede to that demand, clearly proves that their intention is that the revisers will prepare not only the voters' list but also the valuation roll. Mr. Chairman, all the abuses resulting from this system are readily seen. In almost every municipality there are a certain number of properties which might be valued at \$150 or \$160, which is the amount determined to give the right to vote. But if the reviser appointed by the Government is not an honest and conscientious man, if he is too anxious to serve the interests of the Government, this man will estimate at \$140 a certain number of properties which are worth from \$150 to \$160, when he will know that the holders of such property are Liberals. On the other hand, he will value at \$150 properties which will only be worth \$25 or \$100, when he knows that the proprietors will be supporters of the Government. So that, in this manner, it will be very easy to make a change of five or ten votes in a parish, in the relative situation of both parties. Now, suppose that the same thing is repeated in all the parishes of a county, which sometimes comprises about twenty parishes, the majority might be changed by 100 or 200 votes; that is to say, in the counties where the parties are about equally divided, it will be possible to give the Government a majority of 50 or 100 votes. The right of appeal was also spoken of. The Government has allowed the right of appeal on questions of law, while withholding it as regards questions of fact, and even on legal matters there will be an appeal only with the permission of the revisers. I maintain that this appeal is a delusion; in fact the reviser will refuse the right of appeal whenever he shall find that his judgments are erroneous. But supposing that there should be an appeal, do you think it will be very easy for the courts to decide whether a property is really worth \$125, \$140, \$150 or \$160. The result of an election may