

a member for whom, on political grounds, they have the strongest sympathy, they have ever departed from their duty.

I remember very well when this Franchise Act was passed, and when the appointment of revising officers took place; I remember well the case of the appointment of a county judge in the county in which I live. He was a strong Liberal, an extremely strong Liberal; in fact he was known more particularly by his strong partisan feeling in favour of the Liberal party. There was a great dread on the part of the Conservatives that if this judge were made a revising officer they would not have fair-play. Pressure was brought to bear upon Sir John A. Macdonald not to make the appointment on the ground that the judge was an extreme partisan and therefore could not divorce himself from his extreme leanings in the revision of the list. Sir John A. Macdonald refused to make the change, he carried out the uniform practice under the Bill of making the judges revising officers, and what has transpired? No one who then entertained that fear would not be glad to-day to make a public declaration that no fairer man ever existed. While he had strong partisan feelings, he never forgot that he was a judge, and he never forgot to discharge his duties without the slightest partiality. Now I think that obtains generally from one end of Canada to the other. The statements made in vilification of the revising officers, both inside and outside this House, have been without foundation, and I am glad that an opportunity is now afforded hon. gentlemen of retracing their steps and of withdrawing to a large extent what they have said. In proposing to-day to hand over the control of the revision of the lists to these men, they offer a complete vindication of those men. Now I say in conclusion that it is absolutely necessary for the Federal Parliament to have its own franchise. The interests of this country are too great to take a step that may involve so serious consequences. While there might have been years ago safety in employing the lists made under the control of the provinces, experience has shown that that cannot be done now, experience has shown that the provinces have taken advantage of the control of their own lists to disfranchise Dominion officials whenever they thought they could serve their party interests by so doing. In view of the changing conditions, it is always best to make the franchise in this country depend upon existing conditions, to depend upon the great subjects to be dealt with, and for that reason we should control our own franchise. I repeat that there is no ground of contention at this moment except that of expense. But the machinery to be instituted will not be cheaper to any of the candidates. There may be a saving effected, and I hope there will be, with regard to the sums that are to be paid to the revising officer. We must revise the lists just as often, and with just as

Mr. CLANCY.

much expense to the candidates, whether this Bill becomes law or not. It will make no difference, so far as they are concerned, whether the Dominion or the province will bear the greater portion of the sum to be paid for revision, as that will depend much upon the machinery employed. We cannot afford, for the purpose of cheapening the cost of the list, to surrender any of the great advantages which the Federal Parliament enjoys by retaining control of the franchise and the preparation of its own lists.

Mr. CASEY. I have listened with some attention to the hon. gentleman who has just sat down in the hope that he could solve a question that has been puzzling me since this debate began. That question is, Why in the world should an Opposition object to the repeal of the present Franchise Act? I do not know that the hon. gentleman has given me much light on the subject, though I may be able to refer to a hint or two that he has given me, before I close. But it seems to me, as a general proposition, a very strange thing that an Opposition should object to the repeal of an Act which gives such vast powers to a Government as the present franchise law does.

It might seem strange, on the other hand, that a Government should seek to divest itself of these great powers and privileges. My hon. friend does not see any party advantage in it. I think, Sir, those of us who for eighteen years were dragged under the harrow of that Act, were able to see where party advantage came in. It is asserted that our conduct has been marked by a bitter attack on the good faith of the judges of this country who acted as revising officers. It must be remembered that not all the revising officers were judges; it must be remembered, further, that all the revising officers, whether judges or not, employed a revising officer's clerk, who did what some would call the routine and what others might call the dirty work, of the job. It is no use to attempt, as my hon. friend has done, to compare the duties of a judge under the Provincial Franchise Act sitting to hear appeals against a list which has been made by the municipal authorities, with the duties of a judge acting as revising officer in compiling the lists 'de novo,' as he does under the Dominion Franchise Act. The revising officer appointed his clerk, who was always a man thoroughly in the interest of the party then in power, to do the practical work of getting the list ready. No need to go over all the steps which were to be taken. Everybody remembers what facilities the revising officer's clerk had for doing work that had to be done, on the other side, at the expense of the candidate. The result was that, as a matter of fact, the expense of preparing the list was on one side borne by the Government of the day and the people of the country, and on the other side borne by the individual candidate and his supporters. There