

agents, not acting upon uniform principles, and inaugurated, many of them, upon the vote of municipalities. The system that he devised, the county court system, was intended to remedy that evil, and at the same time it avoided the evils on the other hand that arose from complete centralization. Now, I shall presently show, and the main object of my speaking on this occasion is to point out from actual knowledge of the practical working for many years where evils arise, under the present system for the preparation of voters' lists in Ontario, and I think that the parallel between the courts that existed at the time the county court system was devised in England, and the various bodies or agencies that now exist, for the purpose of preparing voters' lists in Ontario—perhaps the best system in any Province, is perfectly correct. Upon that point, therefore, I do not think that the hon. gentleman from Queen's County can invoke the opinion of Lord Brougham as being at all opposed to the measure now before the House, for it has, I think, the advantage of reasonable decentralization, without the disadvantage of the ramification and detail, which is a weakness in itself, and under which last, the duties are scarcely ever efficiently and properly performed. There was another point upon which the hon. gentleman for Queen's dilated, and I thought perhaps a little ungraciously. It was in respect to Prince Edward Island and the concession of the Government—not departing from the principle of the Bill, for they have not departed from the principle of it—but in making that concession which will secure to the men of the day the privileges of the franchise which they now enjoy. I admit that the Bill would have been more symmetrical if it had not been modified to that extent; but it does not affect the principle of the Bill at all. It is a measure which enlarges existing rights, and does not disfranchise anyone. The concession I repeat does not touch the principle of the Bill. The whole basis of this measure was to enlarge the franchise to give to those who had it not the right to vote, to embrace every one who could fairly be embraced, and therefore it would not be in accordance with the principle of the Bill if these men in British Columbia and Prince Edward Island who

already have the franchise were deprived of it, but it is certainly not an inconsistent thing to say that we will preserve the franchise to the men of to-day, but will not allow the principle of the Bill to be interfered with. We will save existing rights, and say in the language that the hon. gentleman has used, once a free man always a free man—they have preserved to those free men the right and privileges they enjoy, but they have still retained the principle of the Bill. I think it is in Virginia that letters are attached to the names of distinguished families—F. F. V.—“first family in Virginia,” I believe is the meaning of it. It will be something if certain persons in Prince Edward Island, will be able to attach to their names L. V. P. E. I., that is “lace voters of Prince Edward Island.” The hon. gentleman from DeLanauiere touched upon one or two points that greatly interested me, and I was exceedingly gratified with his very able dissertation on one branch of the subject I entirely agree with him. Of course the hon. gentleman had the right to enter upon the subject, but whether it was necessary to do so at such length was another question, but I may say upon that point as well as upon the question of manhood suffrage I entirely agree with him. The main point he seemed to dwell upon was that this action was uncalled for except pressing reasons for it prevailed. Now it is the part of wise legislators and wise Governments, not to wait until the evil arises but to anticipate the possibility of an evil arising and guard against it. I will suppose a case in which the evil might at once arise, which I am sure would arouse the hon. gentleman from DeLanauiere into a perfect frenzy of feeling. We will suppose in Ontario, for example, that the legislature forgetful of what is a right in my opinion, enacted that no one should be allowed to vote except he could read intelligently in the English language certain clauses in the British North America Act. In my part of the country there is a very large settlement of French Canadians and many of them are incapable of uttering a word in English, and certainly they cannot read the English language. I can imagine, if such a matter as that arose, the hon. gentleman with all the vivacity of his race, and all the energy of his nature getting into a perfect frenzy of indignation