

ask for the ownership of property in the case of the white man? It is not to the property that the hon. gentleman proposes to give the vote, but he takes that as an evidence of the qualification, of the capacity, of the industry and frugality of the white citizen, to qualify him for the exercise of the franchise. If he is incapable of holding or retaining his property, he is not allowed to exercise the elective franchise, but loses the right to vote when he loses his property. The hon. gentleman has declared over and over again, in his report as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, that the Indian, if he were given his property, would not retain it six months in the great majority of cases. He knows that in giving the Indian possession of his property, he knows he would cease to be a voter before this Act would come into effect, he knows that he would lose that property by which alone he could be qualified. The hon. gentleman says he has no capacity to take charge of his own affairs, that he is wanting in intellectual capacity, and he therefore acts as trustee to him, he takes charge of his estate, and in consequence gives him a vote on that estate, a vote which he would not have at all if the Government did not interfere and secure the property on his behalf. Now, the hon. gentleman's Bill disfranchises a large number of white men in this country. He cannot give a single instance in the history of England where any portion of the community were disfranchised except for offences against the election law. If a man had been convicted of bribery, if he has been shown to have violated the law, he may be disfranchised. When the Reform Bill was proposed, parties who had proprietary rights in Gatton and Old Sarum, claimed it is a property, they claimed that the Government ought not to take it from them without compensation; and yet the hon. gentleman proposes, without any offence being committed by a large number of the electors, without any wrong being done, and without popular sanction in any way, to disfranchise those people; and he proposes to confer the electoral franchise upon a large number of persons who are notoriously unfit to exercise it; and he proposes to do this without appeal to the country, and without having any sanction given him by the electors. The unemancipated Indian controls no property. The hon. gentleman admits that he is unfit for citizenship. He is not allowed to make a contract, and no contract can be enforced against him. He does not serve upon a jury, he does not serve with the militia, he does not assist in bearing any of the expense of the administration of justice, and yet, while retaining the Indian in his condition of tutelage, in a condition of servitude to the Government, the hon. gentleman proposes to confer the highest franchise known to freemen upon him. The hon. gentleman knows that the Indian is not a citizen; he does not mingle with the rest of the community; he forms a member of a tribe, and they stand apart. They have their own customs and their own regulations and direct their own affairs, to a limited extent, subject to his control and to his interference. And without changing that condition, without emancipating the Indian, without conferring upon him the franchise which the Indian Act authorises him to confer, admitting that he is incapable of being enfranchised, admitting that he would lose what he possesses if he were enfranchised, the hon. gentleman proposes to take an individual who, if left to himself, would be reduced to a condition of penury, and to put in his hands the electoral franchise by which he may control and determine the destiny of this country. Now, Sir, our free institutions rest upon the habits of self-reliance existing amongst our people. It is that self-reliance which renders free institutions not only possible but practicable in this country. The hon. gentleman knows that the mere framing of a free constitution, the wide extension of the franchise, the establishment of popular government in form, will not make a free people. The history of Mexico and the South American republics evidence that.

Mr. MILLS.

The hon. gentleman, therefore, proposes to make a man who is without public spirit, who is without any enterprise, who is without any habits of self-reliance, who knows nothing about our institutions, who can neither read nor write, who possesses no property which he can control, a voter, and put into his hands the electoral franchise for the purpose of electing members to sit in this great council of the nation. I say he has no authority for that; I say he is not morally competent to do that thing; I say we are justified in resisting, by all the constitutional means that Parliament places at our disposal, a proposition so monstrous and so unjust in itself. Why, Sir, this measure, in this respect, is nothing less than revolutionary. It is a proposal to change the institutions and the government of this country without the sanction of the people and without the authority of the people. Sir, I admit that if the hon. gentleman chooses to go to the country, if he chooses to make that an issue, if he puts it fairly before the electors, and if he were returned with a majority to support that proposition, then he would be morally competent, as well as having the abstract legal right to deal with the subject. But he has not done so; he has taken no such course; he has no authority for what he proposes to do. It is an abuse of the power with which he is entrusted; it is a gross violation of his duty as trustee for the people of this country, to undertake to force through Parliament a measure of so extraordinary a character and so unjust as that which is now before us. Sir, it is an insult to the people of this country, it is an insult to those who have been exercising their constitutional right in resisting a measure so grossly unfair, for the hon. gentleman to complain that we are obstructing legislation of this sort. Why, Sir, a burglar might as well complain of the resistance of the man who is defending his own house and seeking to protect his own property from pillage. The hon. gentleman is bringing forward a measure which he dared not submit to the people of this country, which he knows is abhorrent to the vast majority of his own supporters; and if the hon. gentlemen who sit around him discharged their duty as loyal party men, they would reject this measure, they would oppose it as strongly as we do on this side of the House. Sir, the hon. gentleman has told us that property is no evidence of capacity or fitness to vote.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. When? Where?

Mr. MILLS. The hon. gentleman did it in this House; he did it from his seat. He instanced the case of Charles James Fox who, he said, could not manage his own affairs, who was incompetent to manage his own estate, and yet he was one of the greatest statesmen of his age and generation. The hon. gentleman argues in effect that while the Indian is incompetent to take charge of his own property and manage his own affairs, he is competent to take charge of the affairs of the nation. Why, the hon. gentleman attacks the very basis upon which he proposes to establish the electoral franchise. He says: I admit the Indian is incompetent to manage his own affairs, but his incapacity to control his own property is no evidence of unfitness to exercise the electoral franchise. Well, if it is not with the Indian, why is it with the white man? Why does the hon. gentleman put it in his Bill at all? Why does he come to this House and say: I will not allow the white man to vote, unless he possesses property of a certain amount, and yet he says: I will allow the Indian to vote whether he has any property or not, whether he is competent to control property or not; because, forsooth, the possession of property is no evidence of a man's fitness to exercise the electoral franchise. If it is not evidence why put it in his Bill? Why say a man shall have a certain amount of property before he shall exercise the electoral franchise, if property is no evidence of political intelligence? The hon. gentleman says: Oh, it is necessary to