

male person to vote in the same part of the province at a provincial election.

In a subsequent part of the Bill there are provisions to exclude some of the women who to-day are voters in the provinces. Those of alien origin who have been naturalized since 31st March, 1902, are excluded. If the amendment of my hon. friend from Humboldt were accepted, the Bill would read:

The qualifications necessary to enable any male or female person to vote at a Dominion election in any province shall, except as by this Act otherwise provided, be those established by the laws of that province as necessary to entitle such male or female person to vote in the same part of the province at a provincial election.

Necessarily, if this provision were accepted, it would have to be qualified later on by the same provision which excludes men of alien birth from voting. That would follow as a consequence; a certain number of those women might be excluded also, and in the same way a certain number of men are excluded from the franchise. At all events, the franchise would remain to those women who are not wives of aliens, but the wives of British subjects by birth or otherwise. That cannot be contemplated by the Act, and it seems to me that no good reason has been advanced by the Secretary of State why the amendment of the hon. member for Humboldt should not be accepted. It all comes back to this: Shall women have the franchise or not. My hon. friend has stated, and the Prime Minister repeated, that the only basis for suffrage for women was service and sacrifice. Well, there are different degrees of sacrifice. There is greater service and there is less service. It is a question of degree. But, at all events, nobody can deny that there has been service. It is freely recognized by the Prime Minister, and by the Secretary of State, that all classes of women have been serving. Some have served to the limit of their ability, but all have made more or less sacrifice. Under the circumstances, if the principle is to be adopted it should be followed in all its consequences, especially in these provinces where the women have the provincial franchise, and where it is thought by a majority of the electors that they should be permitted to participate in the rights exercised by men.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I draw attention of the leader of the Opposition to the fact that section 6 provides the list, and does not give the franchise. Section 6 says:

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier.]

For the purpose of any Dominion election held within the limits of a province the voters' list shall, except as herein otherwise provided . . .

What is "otherwise provided"?

Section 10 reads:

The qualifications necessary to entitle any person to vote at a Dominion election in any province shall, except as herein otherwise provided, be those established by the laws of that province as necessary to entitle such person to vote in the same part of the province at a provincial election.

And other sections say that minors and judges shall not vote. The franchise is provided for in other sections. This section provides how the list of those qualified in that way shall be compiled as the list for the election. The courts have held, rightly or wrongly, that the word "person" as used in relating to the franchise, cannot be held to include both sexes. I am not arguing whether the law courts are right or wrong. The law officers of the Crown have advised—and I have looked into it as carefully as I can—that that is the effect of the decision.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Has the question ever come before the courts in Canada?

Mr. MEIGHEN: The question never came before the courts of Canada, but it has been decided in the courts of England under precisely similar conditions.

Mr. PUGSLEY: It is very different there.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I want to explain the reason why our point of view was arrived at. I did not rely on my own opinion in the matter. The opinion given by our law officers is very powerfully supported. It is quite true that, if the amendment moved by the hon. member for Humboldt were adopted, by a few changes later on, the law could be made to adjust itself and have the effect the hon. leader of the Opposition contends for, namely, that of including in the female franchise all those who are in a similar position to those included in the male franchise. But I contend that that would not be a fair effect, for three reasons. First, because of our naturalization laws many women would be enabled to get the franchise after one year's residence in Canada. Second, the representative compensating character and value would be altogether removed from the franchise. A great deal would be done, it is true, in the way of giving the franchise to the women of Canada, but no special compensation would be