

some minds extremely pleasing in the notion that there should be uniformity, but I do not concur with, or sympathize in the view that there is any loss of dignity to this Parliament, when it decides from time to time, deliberately, that it will adopt such franchises as the Local Legislatures themselves adopt, for the purposes of the election of members to this House. If at any time the franchises of any of the Provinces are, in the opinion of this Parliament, improper, it is quite competent to apply the remedy, and if it should adopt those franchises as its franchises, it seems to me it would not involve any loss of dignity. Uniformity is said to be the reason, but it is to be remembered that though for a great many years the franchises, as they assimilate, have been changing in the direction of uniformity. Even in the Legislative Union of the United Kingdom the franchises of Scotland, England and Ireland are quite different. The Parliament of Great Britain, not the Parliament of a Federal Union but the Parliament of a Legislative Union, has not found it unjust or improper that the people of the different Provinces or Kingdoms in the United Kingdom should elect their representatives under different franchises. That is the great example which hon. gentlemen are so fond of copying—the United Kingdom, the Mother Country; and if you take the greatest example of a Federal instead of a Legislative Union, you find that the very same principle that we have adopted has been adopted in that country, but in a still more formal way; for in the United States the franchise for the election of the common body—the Congress—is the franchise by which the more numerous of the two local bodies is elected—which franchise is provided by the State Legislatures. You have, then, two great examples in which uniformity is not considered essential. You have this latter example in which our very plan is adopted; and it is not to be forgotten, Sir, that uniformity in name may be diversity in substance; because if you are dealing with different conditions, with a different state of society, with different interests, with different occupations, with people—one of whom may have its property on the sea and another on the shore or on the land, one of whose property may be principally personal, another's principally real, a franchise based upon property must be either very comprehensive indeed, or different in form, in order that it may be substantially uniform—different in form in order that that great result which is the true end to be attained, may be achieved, the right to the franchise given to all worthy of it in every Province. We have hitherto conceived that the Local Legislatures, with their special knowledge of the peculiar conditions and circumstances of the people, were best fitted to declare who should have the franchise. But there are other difficulties. There are difficulties to which I shall call the attention of the House even at this early moment. It is to be remembered that a uniform franchise, propounded by the Dominion, means a voters' list, prepared by officials to be appointed by the Administration here—means a revision of that list by officials to be appointed from here—means centralization, patronage, and the control, by the Government of the day, over the whole system upon which our elections depend. It is to be remembered that it means enormous expenditures to the public in the preparation of those lists, and infinitely greater expenditure and trouble in the duties the people will be called upon to discharge in order to have these lists corrected from time to time. It is to be remembered that that trouble—which we all know who are engaged in the actual business of politics—it is proposed to double; because we are to have two sets of lists, one for the Province and one for the Dominion, and, therefore, two corrections of the lists. It is to be remembered that you propose, in effect, a double franchise, and, therefore, an additional element of confusion and uncertainty in the minds of the electorate. Therefore, Sir, for all these reasons I was unable, when the hon. gentleman formerly proposed this measure, to regard

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it as a step in advance. I believed that the best course was, unless and until some practical grievance or evil could be shown, to be satisfied with the continued adoption of the local franchises; I believed that analogy, precedent, the example of other countries, overbore the supposed advantage of so-called uniformity, and these, with the other difficulties to which I have referred, led to the conclusion that things were better as they were. But, Sir, if this were so, why is it that to-day, immediately after the election, the hon. gentleman proposes this measure, not merely to Parliament but to the country? I could have understood the hon. gentleman's course if it had been stated in the last Parliament that this was one of the reforms which the Administration proposed to introduce, and upon which they desired to take the sense of the people. But not a word was heard of it. We go to the country, and immediately after the election, conducted under what is called a defective franchise, the hon. gentleman proposes this change. The Speech glories, as the hon. gentlemen who moved and seconded this Resolution, in the surplus and in the application of it. I remember very well when the desire of hon. gentlemen opposite was to prevent the Liberal Government which was in power from having a very modest surplus. I remember when the hon. Minister of Railways declared that the then Minister of Finance, who estimated a surplus of \$500,000, was guilty of a constitutional crime almost, in proposing to have such a surplus as that, and declared that it was his duty if he had a surplus to propose measures for the relief of the people from taxation, and in that way to exhaust a portion of the surplus. But times have changed. It was the duty of the Administration, when they came into office, to establish—what? A surplus? No, but an equilibrium between revenue and expenditure. In 1879 the First Minister himself, I believe, declared that to be his object—and a very good object it is, no doubt. But equilibrium is one thing, readjustment is another thing, and the surplus which is now estimated, is quite a different thing; and I say that those who, a while ago objected to a modest estimate of a surplus of \$500,000, who proposed to Parliament on the ground that it would produce only an equilibrium the Tariff which now exists, and who to-day rejoice because there is a surplus of \$6,300,000, have altered their views in a manner which demands an explanation from them as to the cause. Why is it that that which was blameable formerly is now admirable? Why is it that their object before—equilibrium—is now set aside for a surplus?

Mr. HESSON. Because we would not trust you with the expenditure.

Mr. BLAKE. Well, I dare say the hon. member for North Perth is of that opinion, but I believe there are many members of the party to which he belongs who do not share that opinion with him. Now the hon. gentlemen opposite and the Speech give, as I say, the picture of a wholly unclouded sky, and attribute that condition of things, though without discussing it, to the fiscal policy. I maintain that a surplus of \$6,300,000 extracted from the people of this country by a taxation so enormously increased as ours has been, is not an evidence of statesmanship, but an evidence of incapacity for statesmanship. I maintain with the hon. Minister of Railways, that a course should be pursued which would produce an equilibrium or something approaching an equilibrium between revenue and expenditure. While the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Tupper) is glad to remember that while our revenue had increased within fifteen years after Confederation to a sum equal to that which the neighboring Republic possessed in its seventy-first year, I would ask my hon. friend, if he will allow me to call him so, whether he had looked at the Tariff of the United States in its seventy-first year, and at the relation which existed between the taxation and expenditure borne by the people at that time. But I would give