

lision between the two Houses on the Franchise Bill, and that I thought a conflict could easily be avoided if Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba were placed on the same footing in regard to an appeal to the judiciary as Ontario and Quebec. The hon. Minister of Justice urged the usual government objections to amending the bill in that direction in this House or this parliament. I then said to the leader of the House, "Your government is on good terms with the local governments in each of these provinces, and they would go far to help or please you; if you will get a pledge from the local premiers of these provinces that they will amend the franchise laws so as to give an appeal to the judiciary, it will be satisfactory to me and I think to all concerned." I pressed the hon. gentleman more than once on this point, but to no purpose. Yet it seems the compromise arrived at is in the direction of what I suggested, although not identical with it. I think it must be evident, from these facts, that I was not actuated by partisan motives or with a desire to embarrass the government by any action I took in relation to that bill before this House.

As to the bill itself, it is admitted on all sides that a more crude and ill-digested piece of legislation was never submitted to the parliament of Canada than this same Franchise Bill as introduced in the Commons by the hon. Solicitor General, and that it would have been unworkable, if it were not for the numerous amendments made to it in committee of that House, from beginning to end, and chiefly by the members of the opposition. The draftsman of the original bill had evidently no conception of the work he had undertaken to perform, which necessitated all the amendments made to it.

TAX ON COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON — Before the Orders of the Day are called, I wish to call the attention of the Minister of Justice to a bill that has become law in the province of Prince Edward Island, containing the following provisions:—

A creditor shall not obtain a verdict judgment or decision thereon unless it is proved at the trial of such action that at the time of such sale the said creditor, or the person who acted and sold for him such goods or merchandise had duly taken out a license according to the provisions of "An Act to impose a direct

Tax on certain classes of Traders," and which license was in force at the time the sale of said goods, wares or merchandise was negotiated.

The legislature of Prince Edward Island some three or four years ago passed a law, imposing a tax on commercial travellers requiring them to take out a license before they could make sales or do business in Prince Edward Island. It has been found that the provisions of this law have been evaded, and in order to prevent such evasion the legislature of the province has this session passed an Act containing the provision that I have just read. I think the provision is an extraordinary one, and that it is a very bad one, indeed, and I may say that there is no second chamber in Prince Edward Island, and that this bill was brought in at a very late stage of the session, and was passed through without that criticism that would, under other circumstances have taken place in regard to its contents. I deprecate this bill, and consider it a very bad one, and agree in every word that has been said about it by the *Montreal Journal of Commerce*, which uses these words:—

(*Montreal Journal of Commerce.*)

Legislation of this class is highly objectionable for many reasons but mainly because of its iniquity and the serious injury it is calculated to reflect upon the credit of the province and its individual merchants where it is in force. We can hardly believe such a result to have been intended, but the above act is perilously near, one to enable Prince Edward Island merchants to repudiate their debts. Now they are well known to us to be as honourable a body of traders as in Canada.

This is the view taken of it by the *Montreal Journal of Commerce* and I have no hesitation in endorsing it. I do not object, however, to the construction put upon this bill, and the comment which appeared in the *Montreal Witness* on Saturday last, which contains an unjust reflection on the province of Prince Edward Island, and it is very unfair that the *Montreal Witness* or any other leading journals of Canada should take hold of an occurrence of this kind, and couple the people of the province in its entirety as being a party to a fraud. The *Witness* says:

The commercial relations of Prince Edward Island with the rest of the Dominion are in the opinion of the people of that province altogether too close and friendly. The merchants and manufacturers of the Canadian mainland have been, it seems, altogether too anxious to do business with the people of the Island, and certain Prince Edward Islanders have been foolish enough to encourage them by buying and selling with them.