

to vote. It would also raise that other question, which is of serious consequence—that where there are three local ridings, as I have pointed out, in a Dominion riding, a number of people must be disfranchised—and I want my hon. friend to keep that in mind—if they go from one local constituency to another, even though they remain in the same Dominion electoral district. That is a very serious consequence of a Bill of this kind. I think my hon. friend will see, if he looks into what I have pointed out, that it is utterly unworkable, so far as the province of Ontario is concerned, unless he is disposed—and I do not think he is disposed—to disfranchise a large number of people in the province of Ontario who otherwise would have the right to vote. Surely, no hon. gentleman would take the ground that we can afford to pass a Bill of that kind, having the effects that I have pointed out—and I have endeavoured to do it without heat, with a view to making this, if possible, a good Bill.

Now, it does seem to me, that the House will hardly agree with the ground taken by the right hon. the First Minister and others on that side, that the franchise is of such a domestic character that it should be under the control of the municipal councils and of the province. It seems to me, that the true basis on which you can fix a franchise is, to take into consideration the conditions of the people and the subject coming under the control of the legislative bodies to be elected, whether Dominion or local. I do not think you can safely disregard that. It is not disregarded with respect to even municipal franchises. We find that it is not so domestic in its character that you can lay down one uniform rule. Under the Municipal Act, the city has one basis of franchise, towns another, incorporated villages another, and local or rural municipalities another. The reason is, as is perfectly obvious, that the conditions are not the same and that the basis of the franchise must be always suited to the conditions of the people and the subjects that come under their control. While there is a difference in the basis of the franchise, they go further, proving that there is nothing domestic about it. The same franchise is not given for voting a money by-law as for electing a municipal council. No one would say we must lay down that rule either with regard to the province or with regard to the Dominion, and, to my mind, there are rights that would forbid the idea of making the franchise the same for the Dominion as for the province. Suppose that we had a question of direct taxation arising in this country. That may not arise in the time of hon. members present, but we are here discussing a question of principle. No one would think that we should give the same franchise for voting on a question of direct taxation as for the purpose of electing members to this House. The power of direct taxation is an extraor-

dinary power and one which involves serious consequences. This has been taken notice of and acted upon by the municipalities, as I have stated, that in voting for money by-laws and by-laws having a money consideration, they have limited the franchise to those having property in fee or upon long leases. In questions of taxation, you must go back to the principle of giving adequate power to those who are to bear the burden. This may be a rather remote case, but it shows the danger that would result from assenting to the principles that hon. gentlemen opposite have stated.

Now, Sir, no one has denied, not even the right hon. the First Minister, that the principle of federal control of the franchise for election to this House is a sound principle. But the excuse they give for departing from this good rule is: While we place it in the hands of the provincial authorities, we still retain control. It seems to me, that is simply a contradiction in terms. That it should be placed absolutely—I was going to say, irrevocably—in the hands of the provincial authorities, and that we still retain control, I suppose, by the fact that we retain power to repeal the Act. But that seems to me an unsound and far-fetched argument. If hon. gentlemen are disposed to place the control with the provinces, they must have decided that they can do so without danger. To fall back upon the argument, that if they find themselves mistaken, they can retrace their steps after the harm is done, is a very strange and very faulty argument by which to justify any legislation, and especially legislation having such serious consequences as this. I do not say that everything that has been urged against the Franchise Act has not been urged without some ground. I can assent, for instance, to the view that it is necessary for this House to make the revision of the lists cheaper. But when it is proposed to repeal the Franchise Act in order to make the lists cheaper, the argument seems to me very weak indeed. Though I have listened with great interest to the speeches on this subject, I have failed to hear one hon. gentleman prove that it was necessary to repeal the Franchise Act in order to reach the end desired, the cheapening of the lists. The allegation of partiality on the part of the judges seems to me to be unfair and without foundation. We are too prone, on both sides, on occasions of this kind, to have very great and very unwarranted dread of what the judges may do because of their political leanings. I am sure that, in all the election trials that have taken place, and in what we see of the records through appeals, we have found the judges throughout Canada entirely free from partisanship. I doubt whether there is an hon. gentleman in this House—and I never heard one outside—who could say, that, so far as our judges are concerned, even in a case that may involve the seat of