

to that list, because more attention will be paid to it. If any means could be devised whereby the candidate would be relieved from that onerous task, I candidly confess that I would like it very well; but I do not think that is possible.

Now, I have serious objections to the Bill submitted to us. We have been told that one of the planks in the platform of the Reform party bound them to repeal this law, and that they are now only hastening to give effect to that pledge. I only wish they were as earnest and willing to redeem their other pledges. If they were, the country would not be labouring under the uncertainty which is to-day paralyzing trade, stopping the legitimate pursuits of the people, and keeping everything at a standstill. In the first place, this Bill is objectionable on account of its being a mixture of a franchise Act and an election law. The number of Acts repealed by it is 11 or 12. It is therefore very difficult to understand. I object to it because it deprives the Dominion Parliament of the right conferred upon it by the fathers of confederation in the British North America Act to make its own franchise law, and to say on what basis members should be elected to this House. In their wisdom the fathers of confederation thought we should have a Dominion franchise law, foreshadowing what has since taken place. Seeing how difficult it would be for people to understand the franchises of the various provinces, they thought it would be wise to have as far as possible a uniform law for the Dominion. I take for granted that no clause of the British North America Act was inserted except for a definite purpose, or except to be brought into operation. I take up that Act, and what does it say? It says:

Until the Parliament of Canada otherwise provides,—

This is done because at the beginning, before the Parliament of Canada had any power to make a law, some method had to be used to elect members to this House, but it was not contemplated that that should be continued:

Until the Parliament of Canada otherwise provides, all laws in force in the several provinces at the union relative to the following matters, or any of them, namely:—The qualifications and disqualification of persons to be elected or to sit or vote as members of the House of Assembly or Legislative Assembly in the several provinces, the voters at elections of such members, the oaths to be taken by voters, the returning officers, their powers and duties, the proceedings at elections, the periods during which elections may be continued, the trial of controverted elections, and proceedings incident thereto, the vacating of seats of members, and the execution of new writs in case of seats vacated otherwise than by dissolution,—shall respectively apply to elections of members to serve in the House of Commons for the same several provinces.

“Until the Parliament of Canada otherwise provides.” Of course, it was contemplated

then that as soon as the Dominion Parliament commenced operations it would make a franchise law of its own that would be as near as possible uniform, and would provide how members should be elected to this House. It further says:

Provided that, until the Parliament of Canada otherwise provides, at any election for a member of the House of Commons for the district of Algoma, in addition to persons qualified by the law of the province of Canada to vote, every male British subject, aged twenty-one years or upwards, being a householder, shall have a vote.

This is the commencement of a Dominion franchise law, because it goes beyond the provincial law. It is as clear as anything can be that it was contemplated that this Parliament should have a franchise law of its own. In my opinion, what the present Government should have done to enable the members of this House to fully comprehend the law they were proposing, was to put before us an epitome of the various provincial franchises, so that we could see what they are when we came to adopt them. We have not got them, and, therefore, we are not in a position fairly to judge what the provisions of this Bill are.

Now, the present law contemplates the abandonment of that right. That, it seems to me, is a retrograde step. If the law is defective by way of being too expensive, let us mend it and make it simpler, as I respectfully submit it can be, and let us retain our right to control the Dominion franchise. I object to this Bill because it leaves the provinces to decide what shall be the Dominion franchise, and allows them to so amend the franchise, from time to time, as to make it prejudicial to the interests of the party in power in the Dominion or the reverse. No doubt our hon. friend's opposite feel no apprehension in this respect, because their friends are in power in most of the provinces, but that is no reason for our giving away the control of our own franchise. In the past, provincial governments have amended their franchise laws in such directions as to fairly lead to the conclusion that they intended giving their friends an undue advantage in the Dominion elections, and it was to remedy this state of affairs that the Dominion franchise law was introduced. We know that Manitoba amended her franchise law so as to prejudicially affect the Government that held office in the Dominion. We know that some of the maritime provinces have done the same thing and that the province of Ontario likewise set the same example. There can be no question of that whatever. Take, for instance, the territory of Algoma and Muskoka. The law there practically gave manhood suffrage without registration, and under its operation, timber inspectors, road jobbers, and other Government employees and hangers on, in large numbers flooded that territory during election times. We have heard the objection