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GOVERNMENT by party is expensive. If anyone has doubts on the point he would do well to read the recent debate in the Commons on the Franchise Act. No very close analysis of the discussion is needed to make it clear that the party system is wholly responsible for the existence of that Act, with the enormous expense it entails. The one reason for being of the Act is the belief or suspicion that the provincial franchises as a whole are adapted to work injury to the party in power. Whether this view is well grounded or not is, for the present purpose, immaterial. No one can suppose that were the Provincial Governments, or those of them representing the great majority of the people, of the same political stripe as the present Federal Government, the Dominion Franchise Act would have been thought of. On the merits of the question there can be little doubt that the Opposition have the best of the argument. Even if we admit the contention of the defenders of the Act that the Federal Parliament has a right to fix its own franchise, it would be hard to show that, apart from party considerations, there is any difference between the Dominion franchise, as fixed by the present Act, and those of the Provinces, sufficient to justify the enormous expense of duplicating the whole machinery. The argument from uniformity is not only quite untenable in itself, on the sound principles of expediency, or regard to existing facts and conditions, which are supposed to lie at the base of British political institutions, but it is refuted by the simple fact that the franchise as fixed by the Act in question is not uniform. There are also two sides even to the question of abstract right. It certainly is not self-evident that on true federal principles the Central Parliament is justifiable in making the franchise either broader or narrower than that preferred by the Province itself. A strong argument, to say the least, may be constructed in support of the proposition that each Province itself has a better right, and is better fitted, to judge on what basis it shall be represented in the Federal Parliament, than the Federal authorities can have or be. But it is not necessary to insist upon this view, or to show that it is in harmony with the spirit and intention of the Act of Union. It is sufficient to fall back upon the stubborn facts that the chief design of the obnoxious Act, but for which it would never have been heard of, is either to escape partisan unfairness in the Provincial Acts and their workings, or to gain an unfair partisan advantage for the Dominion Government, and that but for one or the other of these partisan considerations, or both of them combined, the heavily burdened tax-payers of Canada would have been spared this very serious addition to the cost of self-government. The sum-total of the expense can be reached by adding to the original outlay of nearly half-a-million of dollars, which it cost to inaugurate the system, not only the annual cost of revision—estimated at $150,000—or the interest upon a loan of $5,000,000, as Mr. Mills pointed out but—also the expense of the prolonged parliamentary debates and the incomputable sums expended by individuals and party organizations during the process of revision. It would be a curious commentary on Canadian capacity for self-government should it be decided, as Hon. Mr. Chapleau proposes, that the correction of the voters' lists is too costly a luxury to be indulged in annually, with its logical consequence that every election that takes place is liable to be decided by the votes of those who have no legal right to the franchise, or by the denial of the franchise to those who have a legal right to it.

THE debate on the Franchise Act called forth two or three memorable expressions of political opinion. Among these were the statement by the Liberal Leader that he was not in favour of manhood suffrage, and the emphatic endorsement of that opinion by the Secretary of State. Mr. Laurier, it is true, hastened to modify his confession of faith by declaring his willingness to leave the question to be decided by each Province for itself, thus consistently maintaining the alleged Liberal doctrine of Provincial Rights. It is quite possible that he may be right in believing, as he evidently does, that his compatriots in the Province of Quebec are not yet fitted for so advanced a stage of Liberalism. Be that as it may, his expression of opinion on manhood suffrage was rendered nugatory, as Mr. Chapleau neatly showed, by his Provincial Rights doctrine, since, should the Province of Quebec pronounce in favour of the wider franchise, he would be bound to waive his personal opinions in deference to the wish of the Province. When Mr. Chapleau went on to declare himself opposed to the principle of "one man, one vote," he, in turn, entangled himself in the meshes of his own logic. "If," he argued, "a man has a right to represent property he has the right to represent that property wherever it lies. In order that any scalawag may not represent that property in Parliament the owner should be allowed to vote in defence of his possessions." A little before, Mr. Chapleau had made a distinction, which however he failed to define, between Conservative and Tory. If the Minister really holds that the vote represents the property, not the man, he certainly makes good his own claim to a place amongst genuine Tories. But would Mr. Chapleau be willing to follow his argument to its legitimate conclusion? If the voter has the right to represent property, he has the right to represent the amount of property which secures him the vote. If, then, the possession of real estate to the value of $300 in one city gives a citizen the right to vote as representing that property, and the possession of another $300 worth of property in another constituency gives him a right to vote as representing that property also, why should not his neighbour who possesses property to the amount of $600 in either city have the right to vote twice, as twice representing the specified amount of property? Surely he has, on the theory in question, twice as much interest in preventing any "scalawag" from representing his property in Parliament, and so on *ad infinitum*. It was, indeed, a surprise to hear a member of the Canadian Government, at this day, attempting to defend the retention of a property qualification on such grounds. We had supposed that view long ago surrendered, if for no other reason, in view of the illogical absurdity involved, in assuming that the vote represents property, and then giving to $200 or $300 the same amount of representation as $2,000,000 or $3,000,000. We had imagined that the property qualification was now regarded, like the income and other qualifications, simply as evidence that the man himself was a *bona fide* citizen, having a genuine interest in the prosperity and good government of the country. And yet the Premier himself is said to have warmly applauded Mr. Chapleau's argument.

PROMPT measures are, we are glad to observe, about to be taken to prevent the baneful institution of polygamy from taking root in the North-West. Whatever reliance may be placed upon a recent Ottawa despatch which says that the Mounted Police have secured complete proof that polygamous practices exist in the Mormon colony, and that there is no law in the Statute Book whereby the offenders can be reached, there can be little doubt that the danger of polygamous practices becoming established there is sufficiently real to call for the utmost vigilance on the part of the Government. The fact, too, that the Minister of Justice is introducing legislation specially adapted to remove any legal difficulty in the way of suppression seems to indicate that there may be something in the legal quibble said to have been urged by Mr. Stenhouse. That Mormon leader, it will be remembered, recently claimed that though the law might prevent him from marrying more than once and at different times, there was nothing to prevent him from marrying several wives at one time and by one ceremony. It is well that Mr. Stenhouse, or any other of the Mormon leaders who may be disposed to introduce polygamy into Canada, should not have the encouragement of even a doubtful quibble as to the state of the law and of Canadian sentiment in regard to the matter. Hence the Minister of Justice has introduced into the Bill which he is submitting to Parliament two clauses which seem both simple and likely to be effective. The first provides that every male person who simultaneously or on the same day marries more than one woman is guilty of a misdemeanour; the second that every person who has relations with more than one woman is guilty of a misdemeanour, and is liable to fine and imprisonment. Senator Macdonald, of British Columbia, has introduced in the Senate a Bill much more elaborate in its structure and provisions, designed specially and specifically to meet the Mormon practice at every point and to invalidate all its subtle "spiritual" distinctions. Whether anything in the shape of such an exhaustive enumeration of particulars is needed to meet the exigency may well be left to the many lawyers in the two Houses to determine. As the North-West Mormons cannot as yet have acquired very great political influence, and as there can be no reason why any Canadian representative or Senator should wish to wink at the practice of this most obnoxious article of their creed in the Dominion, there is no doubt the law will shortly be made so clear that not even a Mormon elder will be able to find a flaw in it. The next thing will be to ensure its vigorous administration, doubtless a much more difficult matter. The efficacy of the Mounted Police system should afford, however, a pretty good guarantee of enforcement.

THE Bill for the incorporation of the Orange Association in the Dominion, introduced in the Commons by Mr. Clarke Wallace, passed its second reading on Monday without debate. To those who remembered the strenuous discussions which followed the introduction of former legislation of the same kind, this was indeed a surprise. The meaning of the fact is not yet apparent, and the uninitiated can but guess whether the silent vote was the result of accident or design. When we turn to look at the question on its merits, as presented in the clear and temperate speech of the mover, it is not easy to see on what valid ground the motion could have been opposed, save, perhaps, the veiled political allusion referred to below. One may strongly object, of course, to some of the views advocated by the Order. He may deprecate some of its modes of propagating those views as needlessly offensive to many citizens. He may even regard the very existence of the society in Canada as an anachronism, unnecessary and harmful, tending to perpetuate memories and animosities which should have no place in this new world. But neither the creed of a society, nor its modes of working, so long as there is nothing distinctly unlawful or immoral in either, is generally regarded as a sufficient reason for denying it the legal standing and facilities necessary to enable it to transact business in its corporate capacity. Probably the ground of one of the strongest objections to