

for the enfranchisement of women? If that argument was worth anything then, it applies with equal force to the case of the Indians. We were told by the First Minister that it was an outrage upon humanity that these subjects of Her Majesty, who live and die in this country, who own property, who raise families and who pay taxes, cannot vote. Well, there are a great many white people who live and die in this country, raise families and pay taxes, and who cannot vote, although they are in every way capable of exercising the franchise. This House has declared that our mothers, and wives, and sisters, no matter whether they pay taxes or not, shall not have a vote, and yet the franchise is to be conferred on these Indians who are incapable of exercising that franchise, who have not asked for it, who are in receipt of annuities from the Government, and who would be influenced by the agents of the Government. Let any one go through the reserves, even in Ontario, and let him say how many of these people he would consider sufficiently intelligent and independent to know anything about our system of government, or what are the duties and powers conferred on members of Parliament. I venture to say that there are in Ontario thousands of those men who do not know the difference between voting for a member of Parliament and voting for a school trustee. They will be completely at the mercy of those agents—the men who will be amongst them first, who will tell them the biggest stories and give them the most firewater to drink. The First Minister said that these Indians bought tea and tobacco and other taxable goods, but I venture to say that there are many females in this country, who are refused the franchise, and yet who buy as many taxable goods as a whole tribe of Indians. I say that this argument of taxation applies with tenfold force in favor of the enfranchisement of women, and against the enfranchisement of Indians; and it is a monstrous proposition that we should, in the same Parliament, refuse the same franchise to the women of this country and give it to the low and filthy Indians of the reserves. We know that, so far as the North-West is concerned, the country is looking forward to the time when other Provinces than Manitoba shall be established in that country, when other portions of the North-West shall be represented on the floor of this House, and the enfranchisement of those Indians will have the result of almost making Indian constituencies in that country. The right to vote will imply the right to be elected; and when that time comes, how many Indian representatives will we have in this House, and how many of them will be members of this Government? Is it not possible that Pie-a-pot or Big Bear, or Poundmaker, will be the successors of hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches, or that Blackhead will lead the Conservative party of this country? There will also be the possibility of these people coming here, and speaking their own tongues, and that we will have other languages established in this House. If they get the right to vote, there is no doubt that they will be able to have sufficient influence to bring about an Act of Parliament which would allow them to have seats in this House. I am sorry that the course of the Government has been contrary to what is the usual course in committee—that they abstain from discussing the provisions of this Bill, so that we should all have a full and perfect understanding of its import. I think it would have been somewhat more respectable and creditable if such a discussion had taken place, as is taken upon other measures in committee. Why should hon. gentlemen opposite be satisfied to swallow an important measure of this kind without discussing it? I have never had the honor to have a seat in this House, supporting a Government, but if it were a condition of such a position that I should decline or refrain from discussing a subject of such importance, I hope I shall never occupy so humiliating a position. One effect of the unusual manner in which this

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debate is being carried on will be that the country will become acquainted with the provisions of this Bill, and I think hon. gentlemen will find, when they return to their constituents, that they possess a great deal more information about it than if the measure had been allowed to pass through quietly. The fact that the Bill has taken such an unusual course shows its obnoxious character, and is the strongest argument for the Government not to carry it through hastily, no matter how few are the men opposing it. I trust that the Government will yet adjourn the House, and allow us the time to discuss it which the country demands at our hands for discussing a measure which the First Minister said a few years ago would require the whole length of a Session to be discussed. The attention of the people, I repeat, is being drawn to the matter, and they are asking why it is that, as usually has happened to this Government, so many weeks were spent in the early part of the Session, without anything being done, while these important measures are brought on at a time when we expected to leave for our homes.

SATURDAY, 2nd May, 1885.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). I regret that the Dominion Government did not see fit to adopt the fair and reasonable proposition which was made to them. We have always been willing, on this side, to allow fair and reasonable progress to be made with this Bill, at a reasonable time and after a full and exhaustive discussion of its principles and details, and we are still willing to do so. The fault of our having sat for nearly thirty-six hours, without interruption, is not due to the Opposition, but to the Government, and had they agreed to the proposition from this side, greater progress would have been made with this Bill. They are responsible for the time that has been wasted and for the public money which has been expended by keeping the House in session so long. Here we, on this side, are comparatively helpless; we are numerically weak, and we are to some extent at the mercy of hon. gentlemen opposite, and there is only one way in which we can protect ourselves when hon. gentlemen attempt to force obnoxious legislation upon the country, and that is by discussing all the principles contained in that legislation as exhaustively as we can, under the circumstances. Every portion of this Dominion is affected more or less by this legislation. It is radical and revolutionary legislation; and being of that character, I do not think it is unfair that we, on this side of the House, should ask the Government not to force its discussion at an unseasonable hour. Now, it is said that we have had abundant opportunity to consider every provision of this Bill. That cannot be the fact, because the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson), who is largely interested in the enfranchisement of the Indians, has been evidently unable to understand this clause up to the present moment. He declares that it only gives the vote to Indians who are enfranchised, and who have, by their industry, acquired the necessary property qualification, although it is quite clear to anybody who reads the Bill carefully that, as the hon. First Minister himself has declared, it extends to all classes of Indians, whether they are enfranchised or not, and whether they are civilised or savage. Now, we know perfectly well that some of the supporters of the hon. gentleman, when they heard his interpretation of this clause, expressed their astonishment that the Government should have ventured to submit to Parliament a Bill of this character. And it is not to be wondered at. We know that some countries have adopted various kinds of fancy franchises; but I am not aware that any Minister ever proposed this kind of a fancy franchise—a franchise that appears to be based on the proposition that the more ignorant and barbarous a band of Indians are the more they are entitled to