

with some confidence, especially to those older members who know the value, who have studied the value of the British constitution, no longer to continue this policy.

Mr. MILLS. There is one observation made by the hon. gentleman in which I concur; I agree with him that representative institutions in Canada under this Bill, are upon their trial. I say that with all earnestness, and I believe that opinion is shared by every hon. gentleman on this side. We believe if this measure be carried a very serious blow will be struck at representative institutions; we regard it as wholly incompatible with all those principles of representative government which have hitherto prevailed in this country; and we think the course taken by the hon. gentleman in bringing forward this Bill, in endeavoring to press it through this House in such an extraordinary way, at such a late period of the Session bears a very strong resemblance to the course pursued by some political chiefs in some of the South American republics. The hon. gentleman has complained that we have discussed for a very long time the various sections of the interpretation clause. The hon. gentleman himself invited discussion upon that clause. A friend of his moved an amendment in reference to woman suffrage, on the very first portion of the second section of the clause, and we had a discussion upon that subject. That discussion the hon. gentleman himself admits was appropriately taken; there were exactly the same reasons for carrying on the discussion on the subject of the Indian franchise because it was expressed in precisely the same way as was the woman suffrage question in that same clause. It is true we have had a great deal of discussion upon this question, but it is equally true that the subject has not been considered in many of its phases, and to a large degree the discussion of which the hon. gentleman complains is due to the persistency with which the second reading of the Bill was forced at an unusual hour upon Parliament. The hon. gentleman introduced his measure after the House had been in session nearly three months. The hon. gentleman, when he introduced the Bill at an earlier period in a former year, admitted that it was a matter of such vast importance that it would require a whole Session for its consideration, and yet the hon. gentleman, following the practice which has served his purpose for a series of years, failed to bring forward this very important measure until nearly three months had elapsed, and then, before a large number on this side of the House had any opportunity to consider the merits and principles of the Bill, insisted upon a second reading. It is only necessary to look at the published *Debates*—

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The House met on the 29th January, and the Bill was introduced on the 19th March.

Mr. MILLS. It is true that he gave notice on the 19th March.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It was introduced on the 19th March.

Mr. MILLS. It was several weeks afterwards before the Bill was in our hands. A considerable time had gone by before he moved the second reading, and then he introduced a measure of such vast consequence in an expository speech of less than ten minutes. I hold that we have not, as the hon. gentleman has said, travelled beside the question before us in this discussion. If you look at the two amendments in your hand, you will see that every observation addressed to the Chair from this side of the House was strictly pertinent to one or the other of those two motions. We have the amendment of the hon. member from Prince Edward Island, and we have the general amendment to substitute the Provincial franchises moved by the hon. member for North Norfolk, and we have the third clause itself. All these are before you for consideration, and the hon. gentleman on this side who addresses himself to any

one of these motions, or to all of them, is acting strictly within his right. I regard this measure as one of very great importance. It proposes to take from the people of this country the control of the preparation of the voters' lists. It proposes to confer the suffrage upon women, and it proposes to confer the franchise upon every Indian over 21 years of age in any one Province of the Dominion.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No, it does not.

Mr. MILLS. The First Minister says no, but the Bill itself will show the House conclusively that it does precisely what I have stated. In not one of these instances did the hon. gentleman submit the question to the people of this country; in not one instance did he ask the popular verdict. If the government of this country is to be carried on according to the well understood wishes of the people as expressed at elections, will anyone tell me what is the conclusion at which the electorate has arrived on any one of the three important propositions involved in the Bill now before us? The hon. gentleman submitted the question of woman suffrage; he told us he was in favor of that, he intimated to us that it was his anxious desire that that motion should be carried, but, as soon as it was discovered that a very considerable number of gentlemen on this side were prepared to vote for that motion, a considerable number of the hon. gentleman's supporters seem to have been instructed to oppose it, and so that portion was struck out. The hon. gentleman has not so readily yielded on this question of the Indian franchise. He seems to think that the intelligent and Christian women of this country are entitled to much less consideration than the tribal Indians who reside on the reservations in the various Provinces. We know that this question of woman suffrage was voted down by the friends of the Government, and there is little reason for doubt that the conclusion at which the majority of the House arrived met with the approval of the promotor of the Bill. The Indian suffrage, we find, is tenaciously adhered to. The public will not fail to observe that, while the one proposition has been readily abandoned, the other proposition has been supported with all the vehemence and all the pertinacity that hon. gentlemen on that side of the House command. I do not regret the course the hon. gentleman has taken. It leaves no doubt on the public mind as to the object of this Bill, it leaves no doubt that, instead of proposing to fight the battle of his Government before the electors of this country, the hon. gentleman proposes that it shall be fought in Parliament, and it is here, where there is no doubt as to the numerical strength which he commands, that he proposes to take advantage of the opportunity, and to load the dice, in order that there may be no doubt, so far as he is concerned, as to what will be the result of the elections which will follow two years hence. It is perfectly clear by this Bill that the First Minister doubts the capacity of all white men in the country to exercise the elective franchise. He says they must give evidence of their fitness to exercise it. He proposes by this clause and by the four or five subsequent clauses that a certain amount of real property shall be held in some form or other by the white man or the colored man in order to entitle him to exercise the elective franchise, but nothing of this sort is required of the Indian. He resides upon his reservation. If there is no ticket of allotment or division of the reservation, under this 6th section of the Bill there is a provision that, if the whole property taken together is worth a sufficient amount to entitle each individual Indian to a vote, he shall have the elective franchise. So, by the provision of the Bill submitted to us, every Indian who is over 21 years of age in Canada will be entitled to the elective franchise. While the question of property is of consequence to the white man, it is of no consequence to the Indian. The hon. gentleman knows that the Indian does not own his property. Why does he