

regard to the female relatives of soldiers who are overseas, some 50,000 or so?

Mr. MEIGHEN: That matter has been fully explained. They have a right to vote.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I do not rise on this occasion to discuss the merits of the measure which has just been introduced by the Secretary of State; I simply rise for the purpose of asking questions on some points which I think I have rightly understood, because the statement of my hon. friend was lucid, but I desire to be doubly sure.

I understand from my hon. friend that he has taken the provincial franchise qualifications as the basis of the measure which he has just introduced. If I understand him aright, he has made quite a departure from those qualifications, because, in five provinces, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia; women have now the franchise, but, under this legislation, the women of those provinces, with the exception of those who happen to be relatives of men who have enlisted, are deprived of the franchise. Am I right in that?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes. Except for the two main features of the Bill, the enfranchisement of women relatives of soldiers and the disfranchisement of recently arrived persons of alien enemy birth or extraction, and conscientious objectors, the provincial franchise is adopted.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Am I right in this: that while the women of Ontario and the western provinces have to-day, under the laws of those provinces, the right to vote, they will, with the exception of those who are qualified as the relatives of men who have enlisted, not have the right to vote in this election?

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is correct.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: It was understood on this side of the House, when my hon. friend from St. John (Mr. Pugsley) drew attention to the matter, that, in the next election, the women would have the franchise. Under this legislation, in Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, where women have not the right to vote, those women who happen to be relatives of soldiers will have the right to exercise the franchise. To this extent the provincial franchise is interfered with. I thought I understood the measure correctly, and I see I am right. Did I

understand my hon. friend to say that Assyrians and Armenians, who are naturalized British subjects, were to be deprived of the franchise?

Mr. MEIGHEN: No. They will have the franchise.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I am glad to hear that. In regard to Ontario, I understand that my hon. friend takes, as the franchise list, the list made up in the month of December of last year under 4 p.m. the Act which was repealed recently by the provincial legislature. The province of Ontario has provided for a new franchise, the vote being given to the women, and for a new method of making up the list. I understood from a cursory reading of this Act that the former Act was abolished and was no longer in force; but my hon. friend, if I understand him aright, takes the list made up in the month of December last and makes it the basis of this measure.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is correct.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

The SPEAKER: When shall the Bill be read the second time?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: To-morrow.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I dare say that the Bill will not be ready until to-morrow. We should have some time to look over it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Bill will be ready to-morrow.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: But I do not expect it will be discussed to-morrow; it is a very important measure.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We would prefer to take it up to-morrow, as there is very little other work for Parliament to do. That is why we desire to take it up.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I am sorry the measure was brought down so late, but, as it is a very important measure, I object to its being taken up to-morrow.

#### FIRST READING OF SENATE BILL.

Bill No. 131, to incorporate The Army and Navy Veterans in Canada.—Mr. Bradbury.