

in that he has gone as far as hon. gentlemen can ask him to go. What are we discussing? Section 3 of the Bill, the interpretation clause, the question what a "voters' list" or a "Dominion election" may be. I would respectfully submit to the committee that we will never make progress in this way. When we come to section 5, which provides for the adoption of the provincial franchises, objections may be raised and these objections ought to be considered when they are raised. But to discuss these matters now, seems to me to be beating the air, because it is aside from the clause before the committee.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I would occupy just a moment to point out to my hon. friend (Sir Louis Davies) that, while there is great force in what he says, I have been sitting here and listening with all the attention I could as a layman to half a dozen gentlemen learned in the law, and I find that they are absolutely unable to agree upon the construction of this very simple clause. What is the difficulty? The difficulty is that you have undertaken to adopt the legislation of half a dozen different legislatures, and, therefore, the question of the principle again presents itself. It strikes at the very principle of the Bill. If half a dozen gentlemen learned in the law cannot, after an hour's discussion, arrive at a solution as to what is the meaning and what will be the effect of this law, I want to ask you what the general public, what those uneducated in the law who are going to work out this law in all these various provinces can do?

It appears to me that the very fact that this difficulty has presented itself, naturally makes people question whether we have not made a mistake in adopting a principle which, when it comes to be applied, is found to be so impracticable. But that is not all. If we were adopting provincial laws, if we were basing a franchise for this Dominion upon the franchises of the various provinces, as they stand to-day, that would be bad enough. But there would not be a tithe of the difficulty that presents itself when you remember that, after you have arrived at a conclusion as to how it is best to solve this question and what form this clause should take, three or four of these legislatures, before the next session of Parliament, may change all these laws upon which we are now basing our law. Where are we then? Why, it will be a case of confusion worse confounded, when you attempt to work out the principle that has been adopted of taking the laws of all the various legislatures, not the laws as they are to-day, but the laws as they are changed from year to year, and attempt to take them as a franchise for this Dominion. I am much inclined to agree with the hon. member for West Middlesex (Mr. Calvert), especially after hearing the statement of the hon. Minister of Marine

Sir LOUIS DAVIES.

and Fisheries. I am inclined to think that it would be better to get rid of this whole difficulty by adopting the plan that the member for West Middlesex has suggested, and which my hon. friend the Minister says forty years of experience has proved to work in the most admirable manner.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. In an agricultural community.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It appears to me, that great difficulties will arise by attempting to work out such a complicated system.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. I submit to my hon. friend, that these difficulties are purely imaginary. Where does the difficulty come in? Section 1 enacts "That the expression 'electoral district' means any place or territorial area in Canada entitled to return a member to serve in the House of Commons." Is there any difficulty about that? Nobody has suggested any possible difficulty about it. "The expression 'Dominion election,' or 'election,' means an election of a member to serve in the House of Commons." Where is the difficulty about that? "The expression 'provincial election' means an election of a member to serve in the legislative assembly, or House of assembly, or general assembly, of a province of Canada." What does that mean? No difficulty about that. "The expression 'voters' lists,' or 'list of voters,' includes, when provincial lists are referred to, any poll-book or official list of persons entitled to vote at a provincial election." I have not heard any difficulty suggested about that.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The Solicitor General himself proposed to amend that very clause.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. The Solicitor General has amended that; he thought the words "any poll-book" were a surplusage, and I agreed with him; I did not see the use of them. And they were struck out.

Mr. CLANCY. The objection to that is, that involves the consequence of the adoption of the provincial lists in section 5 and subsections. If this is passed, and there was any alteration made later on, as to the qualification of voters, then we would have to go back to the old sections. The suggestion was made by the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Hughes), that that should be allowed to stand, pending any changes that might be considered by the Government.

Mr. DAVIN. Nothing can be more appropriate than that we should discuss at this stage the principle of the measure. It need not be supposed that the minority who voted, agreed with the principle of this Bill. It will be remembered that the Solicitor General, in introducing this Bill, made a very