

from voting in the Dominion elections. I wish to move an amendment that will remove any doubts that may exist in this respect. I am not at all sure that, as regards the province of Nova Scotia such an amendment is necessary at all. It certainly was not supposed that such an amendment would be required. It was certainly explained by the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), the other night, in the course of the debate on the main question, that it was not the intention—and nobody assumed that it was—of this Bill that officials of the Dominion Government should not be qualified to vote at an election for members of the Dominion Parliament. But, at the same time, it is quite possible that, in the terms in which the Bill is drafted, it might have the effect of throwing a doubt, at all events, upon the qualification of that class of persons to vote. I do not for a moment think that the general principle upon which this Bill is founded will be at all affected by the amendment I intend to move. The general principle of the Bill is that it is desirable that we should adopt, in a general way and for general purposes, the same kinds of franchise as exist in the various provinces. The general principle is that the various provinces are better qualified to pass general judgments in respect of the classes of persons who should exercise the franchise than this Parliament is. For instance, in some of the provinces a woman-rights movement might have acquired a momentum which it had not in the others. In some particular province, the general feeling might be that it was an injustice that women should not have the right to vote, whereas in the other provinces an entirely opposite opinion might prevail, and it might be very repulsive to the general sentiment of those other provinces that women should be enfranchised. The principle of the Bill is that if there should exist those large divergences of opinion amongst the different provinces, we should respect them and adopt the general doctrines and principles which underlie the provisions of the franchise Acts in those various provinces. But if you find exceptional cases, like this which has existed in Nova Scotia since 1871, if you find that for certain reasons it has seemed good to the people of that province that certain particular classes of voters, who would be perfectly competent and ought to vote in Dominion elections, were, for some special reasons, not qualified and could not safely be trusted with the franchise in the provincial elections, it is not at all against the general principle of this Bill that we should provide for those exceptions and not disfranchise for Dominion purposes those who for good reasons might be disfranchised for local purposes. A similar condition might exist in the provinces of Quebec, British Columbia, Manitoba or elsewhere. The sole purpose of the amendment is to provide for those exceptional cases, which can

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be consistently provided for, even assuming the general principle to remain intact in the large, namely, that we are adopting for the purpose of our Dominion franchise the general principles and sentiments with reference to the right to vote which are entertained in the various provinces. This is not time to expatiate on that general principle. We are supposed to have got past it, and therefore I think it was entirely out of place, at this stage of the Bill, in committee, to make orations on constitutional questions such as we were entertained with by members on the other side of the House. I thought we had discussed all that before we got into committee. We are now discussing simply the dull prosaic but necessary questions of detail for the working out of the general principle which this House resolved upon when we went into committee on this Bill.

Mr. McINERNEY. Whom does the hon. gentleman blame for the constitutional disquisitions that took place? His hon. leader began the discussion.

Mr. RUSSELL. I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. He simply made a reply to the hon. gentleman's disquisition and paid much more attention to it than I thought it was worthy of.

Mr. McINERNEY. He spoke before I did.

Mr. RUSSELL. Yes, in reply to other disquisitions we previously had from an hon. gentleman on that side, and which, I think, were entirely inopportune, and which we ought to have been favoured with when the principle of the measure was under discussion. It was the misfortune of the promoters and advocates, of the Bill on this side that they were obliged to answer to the same objections in committee which they had answered on the second reading.

Mr. McINERNEY. The property qualification of the voter was under discussion, and that was what we spoke on.

Mr. RUSSELL. We could have discussed that without bringing in the Federalist, and the letters of Plubius and the Brazilian constitution and the South American republics, and the Swiss constitution, and the distinctions of Staatenbund and the Bundesstaat, and all that sort of thing. I do not think it was necessary to bring in the Encyclopedia Britannica on the question whether or not it was advisable to change this provision in its details as to the qualifications of voters.

I do not wish to dwell upon this amendment at any length, as I may have occasion to revert to it later, but I wish to say that whatever may be the reasons which did and do exist for the disfranchisement of Dominion officials in any province, or whatever may be the reasons which any province may conceive, at all events, to exist why Dominion officials of certain classes should be disfranchised for provincial purposes, we