

the whole Dominion. We were told when this Bill was introduced in 1885, that it was simple, easily worked, and economical. But the experience of twelve years has proven that the law is complicated, that it is open to various interpretations by the revising officers, and that the revising officer of one riding takes an entirely different view of the qualifications, from the revising officer of another riding. In order to show the House that this is so, I intend to submit one or two facts, because I find that in discussing a question of this kind, facts are more important than all the rhetoric, or all the eloquence—if I did possess such a thing—that I could possibly use. I find that one of the revising officers, when an application was made to him to add a large number of income voters placed upon the list in a western constituency, gave the following judgment on the following declaration. The declaration was made in due form of law under the sanction of the statute, in the following words:—

I am in the receipt of wages to the value of \$300 a year and over, and have been so for one year prior to the 1st of January, 1886; and have been a resident of the city for that same period.

Now, would it be believed that this sapient and all-wise returning officer appointed by the Conservative Government, rejected that declaration and so disqualified over thirty voters. He says in his judgment:

I want information, and information must be supplied in an intelligible form. The "1st of January, '86," in figures, not written, must be supplied in so many words, and not by contractions.

And so this wise revising barrister, whom the late Government appointed in 1885, disqualified thirty voters because "1st January, '86" was in figures and not in writing. This learned gentleman goes on to say:

The words "\$300 or over" convey no meaning. The law requires it to be "not less than \$300."

Well, if it was over \$300 it could not be very well less than \$300, don't you see, but this wise returning officer, appointed by the Conservative Government, disqualified a large number of voters, because in the first place the figures were not written, and in the second place, because the words "\$300 and over" were used instead of "not less than \$300." I commend that judge for his skill and I would advise him to make application to hon. gentlemen on the opposite side of the House for information. There never was another statute in which the loop-holes for fraud and misconduct were greater than in this Franchise Act. The complicated franchise it provides is difficult to understand, and you hardly ever find two revising officers agreeing in regard to them. But it was open to other frauds, which have been perpetually committed for the last twelve years. Let me give you some instances. There is one

constituency in which it was found when the voters' list was placed in the hands of the returning officer, that 125 names were on the list twice in one polling subdivision, and that 15 names were inserted three times. There was a chance for men who had slept their long sleep for ten years presenting themselves; and this was done as systematically and regularly as the ballot stuffing that has become notorious from one end of the Dominion to the other. Over 50 men whose names were on that list had not been living in the riding for years, but had been living, some in the United States, and some in the North-west Territories; 119 names were added on the revision, but only 12 of these were names of residents of the province of Ontario. Over a dozen minors were added to the list by the revising officer. There is another constituency and another municipality in which, at the revision, 150 names were stricken off the list submitted to the revising officer. Will it be believed?—every one of these 150 names was found on the list when it was handed to the returning officer. There you see, is room for fraud, and fraud has been perpetrated, and hon. gentlemen opposite for twelve years have had the benefit of these irregularities and these frauds. More than that: scores of names were added by declaration, not one of which was on the list when handed to the revising officer. All these men whose names were added were Liberals, but their names did not appear on the voters' list when it came to polling day. There were five names on the voters' list of men who had been dead, some for ten years, and some for five years. Several names were duplicated in almost every polling subdivision in that constituency. In my own riding, in one polling subdivision, there were 19 men on the list described as stage-drivers, although there was only one stage-driver in the whole division. There were 19 men on the list that nobody in the township knew—certainly nobody in the polling subdivision. This is the kind of law which hon. gentlemen opposite want us to keep in force—a law that encourages fraud, that offers a premium for fraud, and that when worked out under the manipulation of the revising officers, benefits the Conservative party. In a western town it was found that 119 names of men who were not living either in the town or in the county were on the voters' list; 80 of them had sold out and left the place years before. Forty-six of the eighty were living in the United States, and 17 were dead. Fifty good names were left off the list altogether. The dead men whose names were on the voters' list that came before the returning officer were just as sure to vote as the sun is to rise to-morrow. They are very much alive when polling day comes. Somebody is there to attend to them. That is not all. In my own riding at the last revision, I found that one man