

far as this Dominion is concerned. As to the expense of the individual candidate, I say without fear of successful contradiction there is a very large saving to him. He knows that the names that come to him for his examination through the channels I have mentioned are, in the main, only names that ought to be there, and so his work is very greatly reduced when he comes to scrutinize the list and to secure the revision of it. But the saving to the Dominion is an absolute saving of all the expenses except, in the event of the lists not having been revised within the year, and the Dominion being obliged to use that board of registration for the purpose of preparing a new list. In that case the officers would be Dominion officers and the Dominion would pay the expense of them, but this would be a mere bagatelle in every constituency, compared with the expense we have now. There is a saving in the very large item of printing and in the revising officers' fees. If there were no other advantages in this Bill, getting such lists as we are likely to get, at any rate as the law is administered in Ontario, it would be well worth saving.

I am free to admit that if there is such a case in Prince Edward Island as the hon. member for East Queen's has stated, if in utilizing the list in Prince Edward Island, we should be adopting a list twenty-five years old, there is a wrong. No list of twenty-five years standing can represent the electors of to-day, and if there is any such list as that, some provision should be made to have a more modern list. I cannot think that the hon. member for East Queen's is correct; I think that there must be some mistake about it. I cannot imagine that Prince Edward Island for its own sake, would be willing to accept a list twenty-five years old without revision. This would mean that a new generation had been born and had grown up since the list was made and were still disfranchised. I think there must be some mistake about it, but if there is no mistake, then such a case as that ought in some way to be provided for. When the debate was on before one hon. gentleman, I think it was the hon. member for Annapolis (Mr. Mills), said that any province might change the law and might allow women to vote. Well, under present circumstances that is something so easily remedied that it only has to be mentioned to enable us to prevent anything of that kind occurring.

An hon. MEMBER. There would be no harm.

Mr. BRITTON. Perhaps not, but at the present time we are not sufficiently advanced, not so advanced as some of us would like to be, to say that we are willing to give the franchise to women. In all the provinces the law reads something like this: That every male person who is a British

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subject by birth or naturalization, and of the full age of twenty-one years, and possesses the qualification required in the locality, is entitled to vote. But just now, it seems to me, and I offer it as a suggestion at this stage of the debate, it seems to me that there would be no harm in adopting that as the first part of this clause 5 of the Bill, and say that the persons who are entitled to vote are male persons above twenty-one years of age, who are British subjects by birth or naturalization, and who are possessed of the qualifications necessary for the exercise of the provincial franchise. That would remove any difficulty such as was suggested by the hon. member for Annapolis. As far as Ontario is concerned, the disqualifications are those which show a desire on the part of the Government of the province of Ontario to have an election as free as possible from taint, or any influence that would be bad or that would work against having the greatest freedom of expression of opinion on the part of the electorate. I have not heard any hon. gentleman who finds fault with them on that ground. So I think that, guarded with such care, both as to those who are disqualified and to those who are qualified, and providing for the machinery which we are at liberty to make use of, I fail to appreciate the objections that are made to the Bill.

Mr. HUGHES. In opposing the present Bill, I may be permitted to give a few reasons actuating my course. The proposal, in short, is to return to the old system in vogue before the present Franchise Act was passed some years ago. I presume the members of each province will reason from their own point of view, and I propose to discuss it from the view point of a member from the province of Ontario. Those of us who are familiar with the Ontario election law, particularly those of us who sit on this side of the House, know to our sorrow the defects in that law. I will not say the expense is as great as under the Dominion law, but the difficulty of obtaining a good list is as great as it is under the Dominion law. But once this list is prepared there are other difficulties. When we come to the question of voting we are met, not with the secret ballot we have in the Dominion, but with a numbered ballot, and we know how that is used. In the recent election in the province of Ontario, one gentleman came to me and said he feared he could not support the Conservative candidate because his tenant, a Conservative who rented a hotel from him, had informed him that the license commissioner had told him that they very much feared that if the owner of the property voted for the Liberal-Conservative candidate a license would not be given him for next year. So this man stood face to face with either losing his rent or with having to vote for