

their natural lives, it is only a small further concession to ask that they should be able to tell their children that what they have gained for themselves they are able to pass down to them, and to express a hope that they will be as faithful and careful to preserve it as their fathers had been. I would not by any means be ashamed to point to the political history of that province. If I were to do so at any length I should tell a story of a hard struggle for liberties and for rights which have been enjoyed by most other parts of Canada. I should tell of a manly, consistent struggle carried on for years; I should tell of some unhappy infractions of the law, and I should tell, also, that in solving the great question which agitated the people of Prince Edward Island, they accomplished their object at last, and no proprietor of land in any part of the country could say that he was wronged out of a shilling in parting with his vested rights. I would ask hon. gentlemen is it at all likely that men who would act in that way would easily part with so valuable a privilege as they once enjoyed? If so I have formed a very inadequate appreciation of their political principles and feelings, and when I speak in this way I speak not of one party only, because I am well aware that these same principles are held by the men of both parties there. If it were necessary to bring evidence of that before this House I should point to the fact that the four members from Prince Edward Island who were in the House of Commons when the division was taken on the Franchise Bill, and when an amendment similar to this which I hold in my hand was moved, all voted for it. I think that having explained the position of my province, and having spoken of the right which people have to maintain and preserve perfectly inviolate their political rights, it will be sufficient for me to read my resolution to this House, and to call upon its members to give it their cordial support. I shall therefore make this motion:—

That the Bill be not now read a third time, but that it be amended by striking out in the ninth clause the words "and Prince Edward Island" in the 18th and 19th lines, and by striking out the word "respectively" in the 28th line, and by inserting as a sub-section to clause nine the following:—

"In the Province of Prince Edward Island the provincial qualification of voters shall

continue to be the qualification of voters for the election of members of the House of Commons."

HON. MR. DICKEY—My hon. friend from Prince Edward Island has made an appeal to his co-members who were here some ten years ago when a question arose with regard to the electoral franchise of the voters in Prince Edward Island, which was proposed to be taken away by the then existing government, and as I was one of those to whom he appeals permit me to say a few words. I entirely agree with the hon. member that it is a very difficult, and I may add in all consistency, an improper thing for any government or any parliament to take away the existing franchise enjoyed by any particular body of electors, without first submitting the question to them for their consideration, in order that they may have an opportunity of voting upon it. Had this Bill come up before us in the form in which it was presented first to the House in another place I should most certainly have gone with my hon. friend in any motion that he might make to preserve the existing franchise to the electors of Prince Edward Island in the same way that they now enjoy it until they had a constitutional opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it, and I should have done that in all consistency, because referring for a moment, not with a view to reviving any difference of opinion, but to a precedent which existed in the Province of Nova Scotia, I should be compelled to take that course. On that occasion in the year 1863—I am sorry to say so long ago as 22 years—a motion was made by the then existing Premier, and a Bill was brought in by him (I allude to the late Hon. Joseph Howe) which proposed to take away the franchise that had existed for some six or seven years or more in the province of Nova Scotia, embracing what is called resident suffrage—that is to say that every person resident in the country, who was over 21 years of age, had a franchise. On that occasion I as one of the Conservative party acting in concert with the whole body of Conservatives voted against that Bill as it stood then, unless it was qualified by a provision that the existing electors should have an opportunity of passing upon that measure,