

have the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Russell) disputing with some hon. members on this side, and although there is no man more eminent in the law in the province from which I come, on that side of the House, still he is at variance with other able lawyers as to who, under the Act, can be placed on the voters' lists of Nova Scotia. If that is the case with lawyers, how will it be with ignorant revisers who know nothing about the law, but who are partisans above everything else; ignorant so far as the law is concerned, having knowledge in their own spheres of life, but being ignorant of the law, being partisans, being always in doubt, they look to their ward heelers who want to get men on or off the list, and so they do exactly as the machine politicians dictate to them. If you have a man who can intelligently review these lists, a man who understands how to properly interpret the law and has the courage of his convictions, then you will have a proper voters' list. The right hon. the Premier has stated that it is the policy of his Government to have the franchises regulated by the different provinces because, as he says, the provincial legislatures understand better the local conditions. I do not know but that he also stated that they knew who were sufficiently well educated to vote for the return of a member to this Parliament. He made the reference, at all events, to the Indians, and if that expression will apply to the Indians, it must apply to those disfranchised electors in Nova Scotia. Not only are some of these men kept off the lists, but many are called to halt when they go to the polls by that disqualification oath, and will any one tell me that these men are not intelligent enough to vote at an election, in the interests of the country. If this Bill passes in its present form, it will be one of the most degrading laws that was ever enacted in this Parliament. Sir, we are taking a long stride in retrogression if we put such a law upon the Statute-book. In 1892, or 1893, I brought to the notice of this House that most disgraceful franchise law of Nova Scotia, and I endeavoured to get Parliament to pass a retaliatory measure which would prohibit all local officials from voting at a Dominion election, so that the local government might be forced to remove the disfranchising clause which prohibited Dominion officials in Nova Scotia from voting at provincial elections. The Minister of Finance, to a certain extent, was correct when he said that the province of Nova Scotia enacted no law prohibiting any man in Nova Scotia from voting for a member of the Federal Parliament. They had no power to do that, but they did enact a law preventing the names of Dominion officials being placed upon the list, and disqualifying them from voting at the provincial elections, and, Sir,

that very same law is engrafted in this Bill now before the House. So, if this Bill passes, the Parliament of Nova Scotia will have enacted a law which will prohibit Dominion officials in Nova Scotia from voting for candidates for this House. I think it is the duty of this side of the House to give this Bill a most decided opposition—a continued opposition, if you will. I believe that a good, fair, square, substantial Act could be enacted in this House. Let men get together and meet each other as men, and enact a Franchise Act that will do justice to all. Then, it will be a credit to this House and a credit to this country. The right hon. leader of the House points to the United States of America as an example of allowing the states to regulate the franchise for the federal parliament. To be sure it does; but it keeps a control over that franchise. Did it not do so when the fifteenth amendment was passed, calling into the voting arena the black population of the United States? That was entirely against the feeling of a great number of the Southern States but still the federal parliament passed that amendment; and there were other Acts, which I cannot just now remember, passed by the federal parliament of the United States, whereby it showed its control over the franchises of the different states under which members to the federal house were returned. I believe we would be doing something degrading if we gave to other parliaments the responsibilities and duties that are specially our own. It would be entirely a retrograde step, and I protest as strongly as I possibly can against any such transaction as this. There are a great many iniquities in this Bill, which should be amended; but there is no clause that should be more particularly amended than the clause we have under consideration at the present time.

Mr. McLENNAN (Inverness). With regard to the observations of the hon. member for Annapolis (Mr. Mills), I may say that, however much I admired the melody of his voice, and the very strong points he appeared to be making, in his own estimation, I did not rise equal to applauding him with the vehemence that some other hon. gentlemen did. The fact of the matter is I did not applaud him at all. While on my feet, I may say, with regard to the application of the Franchise Act in the province of Nova Scotia that I have been for sixteen years a member of the municipal council of Inverness, upon which body among other duties devolved the duty of applying the Franchise Act of the province. I am not a lawyer and therefore cannot join in the disputation which the hon. member for Annapolis declared was being waged between the lawyers in this House. I was one of the members of a body whose duty it was to apply the law, and not to dispute with regard to this, that, or any other phase of