

they came to the revision of the local lists, they left off a large number of these employees. And that was so generally done that it was found necessary to pass a law here to right wrongs that were being done—illegally done, for legally these employees had the right to have their names upon the lists. In the remarks I made the other afternoon, I expressly asked the House to draw the distinction between the acts that disqualified the electors from voting in Nova Scotia and the franchise law. They were two separate Acts altogether. There is a Franchise Act for Nova Scotia and also an Act disqualifying certain parties from voting for members to be returned to the parliament of Nova Scotia, but there is not an Act of Nova Scotia disqualifying any person whose name is on the local list from voting for the return of a member to this House. But, as I have said, the effect of that Act was such upon ignorant revising officers—ignorant of the law, but otherwise good men—that they disqualified these employees altogether by leaving their names off the local lists, and the Act of 1882 was passed by this Parliament, as hon. members can see who will refer to the debates of that time for the purpose of remedying that evil. The election came on and it was found that a large number of electors had been left off the lists. How could they be got on the lists unless there was a law made to place them there, and it was for that purpose that the Act was passed. The hon. Minister of Finance has put up a target, shot at it and killed it. But it was never alive. It was never stated that the province of Nova Scotia ever enacted a law disfranchising any persons in Nova Scotia from taking part in the elections of a member to this House. But I contend that the effect of this Bill that is before the House will be to disfranchise a large number of employees of the Dominion Government in Nova Scotia in Dominion elections if the Bill is not changed. I state that emphatically—that that will be the effect of the law if it is passed in its present form. But even if the Bill is carried on its second reading, I have confidence enough in the members of the Government to believe that when they see that—and some hon. members opposite do see it—they will remedy this defect. I have full confidence in the Government that they will not disfranchise people in this wholesale manner, and also that there will be a great many amendments that will perhaps make the Bill more presentable than it is at the present time.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I have never heard of such cases as those the hon. gentleman (Mr. Mills) has cited of Dominion officials being unable to get their names on the lists. It is entirely new to me.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I want to put my recollection against that of the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding),

and, while I am on my feet, to do what I can to settle the question as to the reason for the legislation of this Parliament to which the hon. gentleman has referred. My recollection is the same as that of the hon. member for Annapolis (Mr. Mills), that it was because what the hon. gentleman says the law required in Nova Scotia to be done was not done, and these men who were disfranchised by the Act of the Nova Scotia legislature in the local elections, were, designedly or otherwise, left off the local lists, though, as the hon. gentleman says, had the law been carried out, they would have been there. I rise particularly, however, to show why the hon. gentleman should not be permitted to lead this House to believe that everything done in his time in Nova Scotia with regard to the local lists was above suspicion. If my recollection is right, there was great activity in 1890 on the part of his party in Nova Scotia, and the lists were attended to after a very Liberal fashion. The local legislature in 1891 took those lists as the basis for the lists then settled under the legislation of that year, and what is the result? If my information be correct, in one district in the county of Guysborough, as I am informed by those who ought to know, and who take some interest in these matters, and were affected by the facts I am going to mention—if my information be correct, under this lovely system that prevails in Nova Scotia, and that the hon. gentleman is proud of being connected with, out of a local list in the district of Larry's River, in the county of Guysborough, out of 207 names on the local lists, there are but seven who are qualified to vote in reality, or rather who were on the assessment roll.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I do not know the circumstances to which my hon. friend refers. But I am quite satisfied he will find the system to which he refers is based upon sound reasons, and I do not remember that that part of it was ever challenged in the House of Assembly, which was supposed to be interested in it.

Mr. McNEILL. I think the House owes a debt of gratitude to my hon. friend the Finance Minister, who has called forcibly our attention to the fact that this House, at all events, believed that it was necessary for the protection of its privileges to pass a special Act because of the course pursued by the government of the province of Nova Scotia. The hon. gentleman desires us to believe that notwithstanding all the able representatives on both sides from that province who were then in this House, this House of Commons of Canada would deliberately place on the Statute-book a senseless statute, something that was of no value whatever, and that had no reason whatever for its existence.