

of the franchise, is the best evidence that from day to day we will have very serious changes in the provincial law bearing upon this matter. An hon. member, in the course of this discussion, has referred to the fact that a great deal has been said in the British House of Commons, and in other places, as to the question of minority representation. So distinguished a man as Mr. Courtney has urged with great force and great ability in the Imperial House of Commons the adoption of minority representation which, if adopted by any of the provinces of Canada, would be a complete and radical change, under which a minority in every constituency could, by a certain means, secure a certain amount of representation in Parliament.

Now, I put it to my hon. friend the introducer of this Bill, what the position would be supposing the province of Ontario or the province of Quebec should become converted to that doctrine, and should adopt minority representation. The hon. gentleman knows that such an action on their part would upset the whole theory upon which the franchise and the constitution of this country are based, that is, to a large extent, the principle of representation by population. It would introduce a great amount of confusion into the whole system. I will not elaborate that point; I have only to mention it, and pass on.

But I will take another point. We know that a resolution in favour of enfranchising women, moved in the Imperial House of Commons the other day by the member for Glasgow, obtained the support of a majority of the House of Commons. Now, I ask my hon. friend the First Minister whether he thinks it would be right or fair for the province of Quebec, the province of Nova Scotia, or any other province to enfranchise women, and all the other provinces to be left without that advantage, if it may be so called? The very fact that you have a resolution passed in the Imperial House of Commons by a substantial majority, affirming the desirability of enfranchising women, is the best evidence that it is not at all unlikely that in some of these provinces at an early day, the law under which this Parliament is to be elected will enfranchise women. Then you will have a portion of the members of this House in the position of being elected under a franchise which includes women, and the rest of the members deprived of the benefit of having the weaker sex included among their constituents.

I mention these as insuperable difficulties against the Bill proposed, which sweeps away the uniformity that now exists and gives us an absence of uniformity which must lead to a great deal of confusion. Why should a person who lives in one province where he enjoys the franchise for a representative of the House of Commons, find himself disfranchised on removing to an-

other province? He is the same man, and he has the same ability, the same right, and the same desire to exercise the franchise; and yet he finds that he has ceased to be an elector when he has crossed the boundary line separating one province from another.

The **PRIME MINISTER** (Mr. Laurier). That is the case under the present law.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I think not to the extent that it would be under the law now proposed.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES** (Mr. Davies). Not that it will be, but that there is a possibility of it. The hon. gentleman is only arguing against a possibility.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No, I say absolutely. I say that the man who enjoys the franchise in one province and moves to another will cease to be an elector in a great many cases. At present we have practically manhood suffrage in Ontario, Prince Edward Island, British Columbia and Manitoba, and we have a property franchise in Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. This shows that a very large number of electors enjoy advantages in one province which they will cease to enjoy in another.

But my hon. friend from Brockville (Mr. Wood) brought up a most serious and important objection, I think an insuperable objection, to which I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Solicitor General (Mr. Fitzpatrick). He pointed out that under this law a man in the province of Ontario would have but one vote, while a man of the same character, standing and wealth in the province of Quebec would have six votes or perhaps more. So that you are not only going to destroy uniformity, but you are going to give the province of Quebec a very much larger number of individual votes. For instance, in the city of Montreal, where there are a great many men of wealth, who have votes in half a dozen different places, and where it is perfectly practicable for them to poll all their votes in one day, these men will have under this Bill six times greater power than men of the same character, standing and means in the province of Ontario. I think my hon. friend will see at once that this is a most fundamental objection to the enactment of such a law.

Now, I do not intend to occupy any more of the time of the House than is absolutely necessary to glance at certain objections to this Bill. What is wanted is a simple law, a plain law, which the great body of the electors of this country can understand and follow. But any person who reads this Bill with the care with which I have read it, will come to the conclusion that instead of simplifying matters, it has confused everything, and that it would take a long time for any ordinary elector to so study its provisions as to be in a position to carry