

and the members of this Chamber, may have an opportunity of carefully considering and understanding what the policy of the Government is to be. Unfortunately, owing to the war, and owing to the necessities of the conditions in which we have found ourselves during the last few years, this system has not been adhered to as closely as it should have been in the interests of the country. The safeguards that our constitution gives us are such that they should be carefully adhered to. It is to be hoped that, from this time on, now that we are in a period of reconstruction and are, I might almost say, wholly rebuilding the affairs of the country, we will adhere more closely to the safeguards and checks which have been provided in the past to properly protect the interests of the people and to ensure fair play and justice throughout the country.

The Speech from the Throne refers to a Franchise Bill. The Liberal party has always maintained that it is very much more in the interests of the people that the lists should be made up by the local authorities in the various provinces. It is maintained that the men called upon to make up the lists in that way have a very much better knowledge of the people and the country, and are therefore able to compile the lists in very much better shape than men brought in from other parts of the country, and who are asked to deal with a situation of which they have possibly no local knowledge. In 1885, when the franchise was the subject of a great deal of discussion in this country, the Liberals objected to the proposal which was made to adopt a system of revising barristers. The system was adopted, and the Franchise Act which was passed at that time remained, and elections were held under it until 1896. Shortly after the Liberal party came into power in 1896 they reverted to a system of provincial and municipal lists, and elections were held under that system from that time until the War-time Elections Act of 1917 was passed. I do not think that the changes that were made in 1917 would be of advantage to the country at the present time; and I hope, when the Franchise Bill comes before us with all its terms and conditions, we shall find that the Government has gone back to the system which prevailed prior to 1917.

In the country to-day there is a great deal of criticism of the high cost of living. The high cost of living is being brought home to the people more and more as the prices of goods which they require advance from

time to time. Towards the end of the session of 1919 the Government brought down to this House a Bill establishing a Board of Commerce. That board has been operating for some time. Honourable gentlemen will remember that when the Bill establishing that board was brought down to the House exception was taken to it on the ground that we had not had time to consider the importance of such a measure at such a late date in the session. We did not have an opportunity of fully considering the details and understanding the powers that were given to the commissioners. I think the criticism we hear of the action of the board, and of the Government in establishing the board, show that the hurried passing of such legislation is not wise. The other day the board acted in a way which, on the face of it, seemed very extraordinary. The announcement was made in the papers that from a certain day the board would cease to control the price of sugar. The statement was made in the press that the board consider that they had saved the country \$100,000 a day for the period during which they had been controlling the price of sugar; yet, in spite of that, the Government allowed them to rescind the order. It was made to appear that this action was taken because they had been subjected to criticism which they apparently did not think was fair. If the board was doing its duty to the country and was saving the public the amount of money it has been represented that they were saving, it is most extraordinary that the Government should allow them to act as they did. What they did appeared to be the act of a child who did not appreciate his duties or responsibilities to the country. They did not seem to realize that the members of a board of this nature must expect to be criticised, and that their only defence would be a justification of the action they had taken, and to show the country that what they were doing was in the best interests of the people. To-day they occupy the position of having thrown up their hands and told the country that because they have been criticised, they are not prepared to go on and do their duty towards the people in controlling the price of sugar in the country. I think we should have an explanation from the Government in regard to this matter. Sugar is one of those things that touches very closely the pockets of the people, and enters into their lives almost more than any other article of food that they use. I think the Govern-