

make to them is, if they cannot see their way clear to give us our working estimates for next year, to give us at least two or three months' estimates in order that parliament may find it unnecessary to meet so soon. I think there is nothing unreasonable in that.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. It is utterly impossible.

That was the attitude of the opposition all that time. Not a dollar of Supply was allowed to be voted. Parliament would expire by an efflux of time, and they took advantage of that and would not let a dollar be voted for the following year. Ever since the Liberal party have been in power wherever I have had occasion to meet their representatives on the platform, I have asked them to point out one single plank in their platforms of 1887 and 1893 which they had carried out. On one or two occasions I was answered 'We repealed the Franchise Act.' We promised to repeal the Franchise Act and revert to the provincial franchises and we have carried that out. There was some point in that, but here we have in the Bill before us a reversal of that principle. The hon. member from Portage la Prairie said it was not the policy of the Liberal party to take up the provincial franchises, that it was the municipal lists. I can turn up the clause which entirely contradicts the statement that the intention of the Liberal party was to take the municipal lists and not the provincial lists. The very opposite of that statement would be correct. It was the provincial lists that were resorted to.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Middlesex)—The proposal was that we should follow the municipal lists as the basis of the Dominion lists, and not a list prepared by the provincial government.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I will read section six of the Dominion Franchise Act, which will make it very clear:

'For the purpose of any Dominion election held within the limits of the province the voters' list.

Shall except as herein otherwise provided by those prepared for the several polling divisions established and which on the sixtieth day next preceding the day fixed for the nomination of candidates for such Dominion election, were in force, or were last in force under the laws of that province for the purposes of provincial elections.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON.

In some of the provinces the provincial lists were based on the municipal lists, but the federal parliament did not concern itself with how they were got; it was the lists used in the last provincial election, that were made legal by the Dominion Elections Act. That one solitary claim put up by the friends of this government that they carried out one of their promises vanishes in thin air when we take up this Bill.

It is provided in clause No. 1 that the provincial lists are set aside in parts of the province of Ontario entirely, and that the lists are to be prepared under this federal law, therefore, the claim which the party made that they carried out their pledges disappears in view of the Bill which we have before us. There is a great deal of danger in clause 21 with regard to the allowance of ballots containing marks. It is true some wrongs have arisen in connection with this question where judges at recounts have been obliged to throw out ballots where the voter has done no wrong, but that some other person committed a wrong. I am afraid this clause will lead to wrongs and evils immensely greater than that which it is proposed to remove. The hon. gentleman from Wolesley gave an illustration of that, and gentlemen seemed to be amused when he was leading up to the final point which he was trying to make; but every hon. gentleman who listened to him throughout will see at once that there is a possible chance of a great deal of wrong-doing in connection with that clause. You may have the most honest returning officers in the world, who would not put a mark on a ballot that would interfere with the right to vote, but you could get agents outside, without any collusion with the returning officer, persuading the voters that they would put marks on a ballot and thus make the elector believe they could identify his ballot. This question was fully argued elsewhere, and no reasons were offered for its adoption. I regret to find any voter losing his vote through an error, whether done intentionally or fraudulently by the returning officer, but I am afraid the wrong that may arise to the voter under that will be slight compared to the wrongs done under 21. There has been