

Sessions will undoubtedly take place, occupying the time and attention of the House and lengthening the Sessions by days, if not by weeks, as well as in the fact that the conduct of the judges is brought into review, and that charges of partisanship are likely to be directed against the judiciary, we have other evidences of the unwisdom of the Act, apart from the question of expense. The expense, as I estimate it now, will be quite equal to the enormous figure suggested by the Opposition last year. My own opinion, from what information I can get, is that not less than \$200,000 will be spent for printing alone, to say nothing of the salaries of the officials. But over and above all that, the right of a British citizen to exercise the franchise being placed in the power of any one individual, without any appeal from his decision, is something which I feel this Session to be as objectionable as I did last Session. Under the system of preparing the list which prevailed before, the individual could maintain his right before the assessor when going his rounds, if the assessor chose to act in a partisan spirit, which I believe was not the case, or to question a man's right to the franchise, he had an appeal to the court of revision, composed of men elected by the ratepayers themselves, upon whose conduct they could pronounce judgment every twelve months, and who, if their decisions were not correct, or if they manifested partisanship, could be removed from office. If even then a man felt that partisanship was being displayed, he had a right to appeal to the county judge. But under this Act, we have the case of a judge who is a revising officer, brought prominently before the House. On the merest technicalities and quibbles, he has tried to prevent men getting their names on the list, and if he should persist in his refusal, there is no appeal from his decision at all; it is wholly in his power to dispossess these persons of the right to exercise the franchise. These are some of the many objections which were urged against the measure last Session, and which have gathered force during the time that has intervened, and it seems to me that they will make themselves still more apparent as discussions will arise in the future upon the operation of this Act.

Mr. MILLS. My hon. friend from Brant (Mr. Paterson) did not correctly apprehend my dissent from the observations he was making. I did not understand the hon. member for Lambton as he did. I understood the hon. member for Lambton to speak from his own personal knowledge of what came under his observation, when he said that the Indian agent in his constituency had actually given the revising officer a list of the names of Indians who in his estimation were entitled to be placed on the voters' list. That is clearly contrary to law, which provides that if an Indian agent causes the name of an Indian to be registered as a voter, or to vote or refrain from voting, he shall be held to be guilty of a misdemeanor. It is clear that if he causes the name of an Indian to be registered, whether he gives the revising officer a list or gives information which enables him to make a list, he violates not only the spirit but the letter of the Act. Wherever an agent interferes with the view of assisting in the preparation of a voters' list, he is violating this provision of the law.

Mr. McMULLEN. I wish to offer a word of explanation with regard to the remark that dropped from the hon. member for Centre Wellington (Mr. Orton). I wish to state that I have good reason to believe that the revising officer of North Wellington was willing to offer the printing to the local press, but owing to the short time in which the work had to be performed he was obliged to send it outside of the riding.

Mr. WELDON. I desire to call attention to the difficulty that has arisen in the construction of the Act in regard to tenants. It was intended that persons should

have the opportunity of getting their names placed on the preliminary list with very little or no expense. In the Province and constituency which I represent, all tenancies expire on the 1st of May as a general rule, and as tenants have to show that they have paid their rent up to the 1st of January, 1886, they cannot be enrolled until they show that rent has been paid for the last month prior to the revision. It has been decided by some of the revising officers that they cannot put the names of tenants on the list at all until the final revision. The effect of that is that persons who have made applications to be placed on the preliminary list are obliged to notice in advance of the final revision, to attend the barrister's court, and to incur considerable expense before they can get their names on the list. In the cities of St. John and Portland, where the tenancies all expire on first May, the result is that the revising barrister does not put their names on the list, and the parties are obliged to make two applications, the expense falling on the final revision. If a party swears he is a *bonâ fide* tenant and has really paid rent prior to January, 1886, that would be quite sufficient, without compelling him to produce a certificate to show he had paid rent on the first May or June prior to the date of the certificate.

Mr. MULOCK. I am glad to be able to offer my testimony with regard to the efficiency of the revising officer who has to do with my riding. When this Bill was before the House last Session, the question arose as to who should have the final revision, in the case where the revising officer was not a judge. I then advocated the course that has been adopted, namely, leaving the final adjudication in the hands of the county judge, in case he were not the revising officer. I did not approve of the Bill, but when the Government had decided on forcing it through, I endeavored to have it made as perfect as I could. I can well understand that decisions of the judges should not be fraudulent, but yet strike the lay mind as fraudulent. Still I believe that the county judges, as a class, speaking, at least, for those of Ontario, have endeavored to establish uniformity of practice, have honestly set to work to try and put the Act in force according to its practical meaning. It is, therefore, specially to be regretted if any of them should so far misunderstand the object of the Act as to defeat its end by any technical means. I acquit them all of any intention to do wrong, for it would be most lamentable if the public were obliged to withdraw to-day any confidence in the judiciary, because they may fail in some particular duties that may attach to their office. Should a judge, holding the office of revising barrister, prove himself unfaithful in that capacity, there is no position of public trust which he should be permitted to enjoy for a moment, and I trust the House will always be sufficiently independent to remove from office any judge who, in the discharge of his duties as revising officer, has clearly been proved unfaithful to his trust. When the House loses its sense of equity to the extent that it will not administer such punishment, no matter to what party the officer may belong, there will cease to be any safeguard to the rights of the people. It is of the utmost importance to the country and to the Government itself that this Act, as put into operation by the revising officer, shall give entire satisfaction. In view of what has occurred, it is manifestly clear that some of the revising officers are misapprehending their duties and defeating the object of the Act, by attaching undue importance to technical objections, and such a course is, in effect, as injurious as if it were the result of malice or design. As the Government has sent certain instructions to revising barristers, it would be productive of great good if they would follow up the course they have adopted by intimating to the officers that in future they should endeavor to carry out substantially the object of the Act, which is that every man who possesses the necessary qualification be placed on the voters' list, if he