

both parties are represented. Look at the Australian colonies. In every one there is the recognition of the principle that the Government is an interested party and cannot be entrusted with the appointment of the officers. And yet the right hon. gentleman proposes here—what? Before the last election he had taken into his hands the appointment of returning officers, and before the next election he proposes to assume the appointment of revising officers who shall prepare as well as revise the list. Could a proposition be more monstrous? Yet the right hon. gentleman says parliamentary Government is on its trial in the discussion of this Bill. I agree with him, I say it is on trial. I say every vote given in favor of this Bill is a direct stab at the principle of Parliamentary Government. I say that no friend of Parliamentary Government, no man who is not opposed to our system of Government, can support this measure. It is utterly impossible for Parliamentary Government to endure with the adoption of such a measure. Why, Sir, look at the condition of things. Here you propose to enfranchise some 50,000 Indians who will command some 10,000 votes in the next election—all to be thrown on one side. Everyone knows that not more than two per cent. of them will be given in any other way than for the Administration for the time being. That is the position of things. You have only to look at the vote polled at the last election to see what that result must be, if that result were alone to operate. Sir, I admit that in my opinion, it will not have the disastrous effect that the Minister intends; I admit that his scheme will not succeed to as large an extent as he anticipates. I believe that there is a moral sense in the Conservative party of this country, no less than in the Reform party, that will revolt at such a proceeding. The hon. gentleman may bring his supporters in this House to accept such a proposition, but he will find that he cannot discipline the fair-minded men outside of Parliament to support this measure. It is so monstrous that if it were adopted, it is perfectly obvious that it would be impossible that Parliamentary Government could be maintained in this country; and it is perfectly obvious that it would be the duty of the majority of the electors of this country to consider what is prudent in resisting such a measure, to consider whether they were bound to obey this as an ordinary law. The member for Montreal-Centre (Mr. Curran) declared that it was right and proper to bring forward this Bill, although the country had not been consulted, because, he said, we carried the Act of Confederation without an appeal to the country. Well, sir, we did did that. I think it was a great misfortune, I think it was one of the most serious blows ever aimed at Parliamentary Government in this country. Every body knows that the union is wanting in those elements of cohesion that it would have possessed, had this measure been supported by the people of the different Provinces, had their sanction been given to it before it became law. But I was rather surprised to hear such a proposition defended by the hon. member from Montreal Centre. Why, Sir, this was the way the union between Great Britain and Ireland was carried, without an appeal to the country, and without popular sanction. Was there a single leading man among the Liberal statesmen of that day who supported that proposition? Did Gratton, Plunket, Curran support it? There was not a distinguished Irishman or statesman whose name has come down to us, who did not denounce that measure; not one who did not declare that it was a gross violation of the powers of the parliamentary majority to pass such a measure. Mr. Plunkett declared they were there not to create Legislatures but to make laws, and that no one was bound to obey such a measure. It has no other authority than that of force, and has no other support than that of bayonets. Was it a wise act? Has the result shown that it was a wise act on the part of those who carried that measure without the sanction of the nation? Everyone knows that Ireland has been a discontented member of the union from that day to this, and that until home

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rule is granted, Ireland will never cordially support a union; that until home rule is granted there will be discontent; that the present Legislative Union, carried by fraud, carried by the influence of the Crown and by an ambitious and servile Government, has produced one of the greatest misfortunes that has ever affected and afflicted the United Kingdom. It is rather extraordinary to find the hon. member for Montreal Centre (Mr. Curran) justifying the course that was then taken, by declaring it was right and proper for the Government to carry this measure without popular sanction. Let me for a moment consider this question, consider the changes that have taken place in the constitution of England. There have been reforms carried from time to time; sometimes a large stride has been taken, sometimes a shorter one; but it has never gone back upon the constitutional reforms which have been effected. Each step taken has been forward and has only served as a basis for another step forward. But the hon. gentleman who leads the present Government in this House has been trying to unsettle everything. The hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie) in 1874 went to the country upon this question. The hon. gentleman claimed that the Provincial franchises should be adopted; that the local circumstances of the different Provinces were such as to make it desirable to adopt that system. He pointed out that the municipal machinery under the control of the Local Government made it highly convenient to adopt that course, and highly inconvenient to adopt any other course. The Liberal party were returned to power by an overwhelming majority. That measure, as a consequence of an appeal to the country, was put upon the Statute Book. It has been there now for eleven years. The hon. gentleman opposite proposes to take it off; he proposes to do what was never done in England—to go back on the Parliamentary record. And by what authority? Who has sanctioned the change; Who has authorised it? Has the hon. gentleman appealed to the country? Have the people reconsidered their conclusions and decided to alter them? Not at all. So far as we know, public opinion now sanctions what was settled in 1874. Public opinion may differ from us on other questions, but not in regard to this question. I ask hon. members from Quebec who support the Government whether the electors of that Province are not satisfied with the Quebec franchise as they have it; whether they are not favorable to leaving any alteration in that franchise to the Local Government? Quebec does not want this Bill; it does not want the representatives of Ontario and the other Provinces to vote them a franchise different from that which they have adopted for themselves. The Ontario meetings tell precisely the same story. They leave no doubt in the mind of any hon. member who looks into the question that at this moment, whether public opinion agrees with the Government's fiscal policy or their policy respecting public expenditure, public opinion does not agree with them in regard to this Bill. That opinion is expressed scarcely less by Conservatives than by Reformers. There is not a gentleman on this side who has not received numerous letters from Conservatives declaring opposition to the Bill. There is not a gentleman opposite who has not had similar communications.

Mr. HESSON. I deny it. Produce your letters from Conservatives and lay them on the Table of the House. I challenge you to do it.

Mr. MILLS. The hon. gentleman's challenge amounts to very little. There are gentlemen around me who have received such letters.

Mr. HESSON. Why should Conservatives write to you?

Mr. MILLS. Because some of them are my constituents. I suppose the hon. gentleman has no Reformers in his constituency.

Mr. HESSON. Yes, I have.