Mr. SPROULE. I am using the hon. gentleman's own language. He said he was afraid to deal with the tariff question, as the Budget speech would be down in a few days, and he might be obliged to withdraw something he said, because he did not know what line the Government would take. The inference from that is, that the hon. gentleman would endorse the Government policy whatever it was.

Mr. FROST. Perhaps you will be obliged to withdraw some things you have said on the other side, when you hear the Budget.

Mr. SPROULE. We are quite willing to take our chances on that, and to say here and now, what we believe to be right. The hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) objects to the present franchise law because, he says, that if a man comes of age within one week before a federal election, he ought to have a vote. That is the reason he gives for a new Franchise Act. Does the hon. gentleman think for a moment, that if we were depending on the provincial lists, his idea would be carried out in that respect? Why, if a federal election were held in Manitoba two years hence, the provincial lists under which it would be held would be three years old. We cannot compel the provincial governments to make lists for use in the federal elections, and so, we would be obliged to accept that old list, although it was three or, perhaps, four years old. Does the hon. gentleman not remember that the same thing exists in Ontario, and that if we held an election before the provincial elections, which will likely be held within a year from the coming summer, we would hold it on a list that was four years old, because their registration system only obliges them to make out a list once in four years in the cities and towns. If we adopt the provincial franchise, that old provincial list might be the only available list on which to hold a Dominion election. It is the same thing in the province of Manitoba, the same in the North-west Territories, I believe, and the same in some of the maritime provinces. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Charlton) complains that the Dominion electoral lists of 1891 were three years old, but if we now adopt the provincial lists, many occasions may arise when they also will be three years old at the time of the federal election. I may say, Sir, that, in my opinion, the Dominion voters' lists are objectionable in some respects. I have always thought that human ingenuity ought to be able to devise a means whereby we could have a Franchise Act under our own control, which was not quite so expensive as the present one. I believe that if the late Sir John Thompson had lived longer, we would have had an amendment to that law which would make it cheap to administer, and would have removed the objections that are to it. The present Dominion franchise law is objectionable, but in drawing a comparison between the cost of making out the lists under that Act, and the cost of preparing the provincial lists as they exist in the province of Ontario, hon. gentlemen opposite are very unfair when they try to figure out that the provincial lists cost nothing. Does it not cost the municipalities something to print the lists which are accepted as the provincial lists. Do hon. gentlemen not know that the municipal councillors have to pay the bill by levying a direct tax on the ratepayers of the municipalities. The revision of that list by the judge is a much more expensive one than the revision of the Dominion lists under the present law. It is no improvement upon the Dominion Franchise Act in that respect. The provincial list costs as much as the Dominion list, if not more, and is not as good a list. The only difference is that while the cost of the provincial list is paid by the municipalities and is raised by taxes upon the ratepayers, the cost of the Dominion list is paid out of the Dominion treasury, so that in this case you can get at the cost in a lump sum, whereas in the other case you cannot get at the cost, because it is spread over all the municipalities.

Hon. gentlemen say that they object to the present law because it is administered by partisan returning officers. That argument has been answered over and over again, and I am almost ashamed to find any man at this day standing up and saying that the Dominion list is not fairly revised, when the very same men who revise it are appointed by the provincial Government to revise the provincial lists. If they are partisans in the revision of one list, would they not be equally so in the revision of the other? For my part, I have never seen any indication of any revising officer in the province of Ontario doing anything but his duty in this respect. I live in a county where there is one revising officer who is not a judge. In most cases the revising officers are county judges, and I think no one will say that they are not fair in their decisions. The hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) insinuated as much; but I have never known even a hard-shell Reformer to accuse any revising officer of doing other than his duty. One of the revising officers in my county was a barrister of five years' standing, and, therefore, qualified to be appointed a county judge. He did as the other revising officers in the county, viz., explain before he commenced the revision the rules he intended to be guided by. This was explained to both parties before the revision, and I never heard any objections raised to his rulings or any unfairness charged against him.

It is said that under the existing law it is troublesome to candidates to look after the list. I have no doubt it is, and it is also troublesome to look after the provincial list, and if we are to be confined to the provincial list, then the trouble will be transferred