

true that, in the beginning of this debate, when we found that the Opposition had adopted the tactics of obstruction, for the purpose of prolonging the debate unnecessarily, we, on this side of the House, did make a good deal of noise; but the moment the Opposition complained that we were trying to gag them, we said: We will keep still and give you an opportunity. Since then, there has been perfect silence on this side of the House. As to evidences of excitement that have been referred to by hon. gentlemen opposite, I think they have been quite as visible among hon. gentlemen of the Opposition as on this side, although I do not think there has been, on either side of the House, anything discreditable to Parliament. A great point is endeavored to be made against the Government in respect to enfranchising the Indians; and hon. gentlemen opposite pretend that the Government are guilty of a great crime in giving them the franchise. Sir, hon. gentlemen opposite have long been asserting that the Government was showing an undue preference for the rich men against the poor; that they neglected the low and humble; but to-night they talk in an opposite strain, and find fault with the Government for paying attention to the poor and the lowly. Sir, I say it matters not what nationality a man belongs to, whether he be Indian or negro, if he possesses the same qualifications for the franchise that a white man does, he ought to receive it. This Bill does not propose anything else. Why try to create prejudices against the Indians at this particular moment? I believe that were it not for the existing troubles in the North-West we would not have heard so much about the Indians; but hon. gentlemen opposite are taking advantage of these troubles to inflame the public mind against the Indians. Why should not the Indians have the franchise as well as anybody else, provided they stand upon the same footing as others? If there is any prejudice against that race, it is the duty of the Government to try to wipe it out by means of legislation; and I say there is no nobler duty, there is no higher duty, for a statesman to perform, than to come to the assistance of the lowly and the humble, who are surrounded by prejudices, and try to assist them and lift them up. It is unworthy of a statesman, because there exists some prejudices against the Indians on the part of the ruling races, to take advantage of those prejudices for the sake of gaining a party advantage. All this Bill proposes to do is simply to place the Indians on an equal footing with other men, and to give them equal privileges whenever their conditions are equal. That is the interpretation I put upon the Bill, and I believe the country will so understand it. While we refuse to give them the same privileges as we give white men, does such a policy not tend to keep them down? Does it not tend to keep them in that humble and lowly position? The sooner we, by legislation, give them a helping hand and raise them to a higher level, the better it will be for them and the better it will be for this Dominion. In view of these facts, I think there is no harm in adopting this clause of the Bill and enfranchising those Indians who are equally qualified with white men to exercise the franchise. If it should be found, after a few years' experience, that they do not exercise the franchise in a proper way, then we can change the policy and adapt it to circumstances. But let us give them a trial, at any rate; if they do not use the franchise properly, we can take it away from them. Now, it is asked: Why this undue haste in pressing this measure upon the country? I will tell you one reason, in my opinion, why it should be passed this Session. We have two years before us before the next general elections, and if we find, after one year's experience, that the Act requires to be amended, whether as regards the revising barristers or otherwise, we shall have another Session in which to amend it before the elections come around. If we find there is any friction in its operation, we can remedy the evil at our next Session. No harm can be done by the lists

Mr. LANDRY (Kent).

lying in the office of the revising barristers for a year, as they will not be used; and if any errors creep in, if it is found that this Bill requires amendment, we will have time to remedy the imperfections before the next election. The Indians, in the meantime, who may make application to have their names put on the list, can do so, and if it is found that some are on the list who are not entitled to the franchise under the law, next winter we will be in a better position to amend the Act and make it more nearly perfect. There is another still stronger reason why we should pass this measure now, and that is in order to settle the question whether the Government or the Opposition are going to rule this House—whether the majority or the minority are going to control the legislation of this Parliament. If the rules of the House permit, if the constitution of this country permits, that legislation should be in the hands of the Opposition, the sooner that is understood the better, and the sooner the Government give up their functions the better. I do not wish to speak harshly of the Opposition, but I do say that I am prepared to support the Government in taking vigorous measures to ensure that the will of the majority shall control the legislation of this Parliament. The Government represent the majority of this House, who represent the majority of the country. The country has put them in their present position, and they must be considered as representing the will of the country, and therefore are justified in pushing this measure through. If it be such a bad Bill as the Opposition contend, let them appeal to the country. If they think they can convince the people that the Bill is as bad as they say, they will have an opportunity of doing so; but, in the meantime, I think we should pass this measure, and I shall vote for the clause being adopted.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). The hon. gentleman who has just sat down is one of whom I have formed a rather high opinion from his utterances in this House. I would only venture one or two criticisms on his remarks. During the larger portion of his speech he did not discuss the question which is before the committee, but contented himself with speaking in defence of the conduct of the majority in compelling this committee to sit for three days and two nights. In the closing part of his remarks, however, he did give some views with reference to the question before the committee, and in those utterances he has furnished the committee with the clearest and most palpable proof of the absolute necessity that existed that this question should have been discussed till the present time, and that it requires more discussion still. He is a gentleman of intelligence, a member of the legal profession, who I am told is not unlikely to be raised to the bench of his native Province at no distant day—and I have heard members from New Brunswick, who are not in political accord with him, say that they would consider the bench would not be lowered if he occupied that position—and yet he has manifested to the committee a degree of ignorance that I think no one should possess when called upon to give a vote upon this question. He has asked why we should withhold from the Indian, when he is in the same position as any other citizen of this country, the rights of any other citizen. The question is a proper one, and no man who would withhold those rights would be worthy of a place in Parliament; but the whole point is contained in the fact that the Indian is not in the same position as other citizens of Canada. The very paragraph we have been considering declares that an Indian does not stand in the same position, because it says that the word "person" shall mean any male person, including an Indian. If there was not a distinction, that addition would not be necessary. The First Minister knows that if the words, "including an Indian," were not in the Bill, no unenfranchised Indian would have the right to vote, and he desires that Indians who are not enfranchised, who