

disfranchise anybody, because it simply adopts the franchise of each province.

Mr. LISTER. Well, I say that it temporarily, at all events, disfranchises the Indians of this country, it may not do so permanently. My hon. friend may trust to the local legislatures throughout the country granting the franchise to the Indians of the different provinces. That, however, is problematical, that may never be done, and if it is not done, as a matter of fact the Bill now under consideration deprives the Indians who have voted for the last fourteen years, of the right to vote. I say this is an arbitrary measure. The hon. gentleman says this Bill must go through, that there can be no exception made. The Solicitor General says that if it turns out in the future that a province acts unjustly in adopting provisions respecting voting, then we can intervene and undo what they have done. If that is the intention of the Bill and if that is the power the Government reserves to itself, which is no doubt the case, then they are depriving unjustly a portion of the population of the right they possess, or of the right to continue to vote under the Franchise Act. I say again that once having given the franchise to a portion of the people, who have proved themselves able to exercise it intelligently, the Government should not now take away from those people that which free men all consider a boon, and do an act which the Indians will remember as one of the greatest injustices ever perpetrated upon them by any legislature in this country. The Solicitor General has stated that a large portion of the Indians of Ontario have the right to vote now. I deny it. A very small percentage of the Indians of that province are entitled to vote as enfranchised Indians. They are living on the reserves, and everybody knows that Indians have an objection to becoming enfranchised for many reasons, tribal reasons among others. But we need not go into these questions, but remember the one question, and that is, that we once gave the vote to these men, they have had it for years, and there is no good cause for taking it away from them.

Mr. MACLEAN. Do we understand the Solicitor General to lay down the basis of this Act as follows: That this Parliament has a session and it closes. The Government then decide they will go to the country. The legislature of Ontario happens to meet, and that body deprives a large number of citizens of the franchise, and they are not able to vote when the Dominion elections come on. Is that the situation which the franchise occupies in this Act? If so, then it is the worst Act ever submitted by a Canadian Government, it is the greatest attack ever made on our federal institutions. It is the strongest attack ever made on the autonomy of Canada; and I hope now that this statement has been

made, Parliament will be able to defend its franchise from the attacks made by the Liberal party, and I hope in some other quarter the rights of the people will be protected, and the federal power will continue to control its own franchise so that the voice of the people of Canada may be heard.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. By whom was the assault made on the people of Canada from 1867 to 1885?

Mr. MACLEAN. That is another question.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. I also point out to the hon. gentleman that if he had carefully read the Bill, he would have found that the very case he has discussed has been provided for by subsection 2 of the section we are now considering.

Mr. LISTER. Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, for again addressing the House. I say, what I stated in 1885, that no Government ever introduced a more unjustifiable measure than the Government did in that year. I opposed it then, and have opposed it since. The Liberal party has pledged itself, election after election, that if returned to power, the Act would be repealed. They are bound to the people to repeal that Act, and I believe I voice the feelings not only of the Liberal party but of a large portion of the Conservative party when I say they desire the repeal of that Act. It has been most burdensome in its working, and every member who has had anything to do with elections knows hundreds of dollars have been expended during the twelve years for the purpose of trying to make perfect an Act which it was impossible to make perfect. We have pledged ourselves, over and over again, to the country to repeal it; the people have returned us to power on that pledge, and we will prove false to the people if we do not repeal the Act. But I say in this one case an exception might be made by the Government and Parliament, so as to continue to the people who have been given votes under the Act the right to vote at elections for members of this legislature.

Mr. QUINN. I think this is the clearest proof in the world that in the one case in which the Liberal Government have attempted to carry out its promise, it has made the usual leap in the dark. The party pledged itself to the country to repeal the Franchise Act. Hon. gentlemen introduce a measure framed for that purpose, and the first clause is attacked on all sides by their own followers. We have the question of the Indians discussed. What difference is there between the Indians affected by the Ontario Franchise Act and the class of persons included under section 15 of the Quebec Election Act? The following persons in that province are not allowed to vote:—

Clerks of the Crown, clerks of the peace, sheriffs, registrars, Crown lands and Crown timber