

Government, even at this late day, are alive to the fact that the Franchise Act needs amendment. In my judgment it needs sweeping away. If it had not been for the Franchise Act and the fiscal policy of the Government, my hon. friend from Welland would not have had to make the observations that he did in the introductory part of his speech to-day. We all must recognize that there is a spirit of unrest in this country—that, although the great bulk of the population, nine-tenths of the people, are loyal to the Crown, yet there is an element that is outspoken in opposition. The causes that create that spirit, I will not say of disloyalty, but of dissatisfaction, with the existing conditions which is illustrated by the flight of so many thousands of persons from this favoured land, all has its origin in the Franchise Act, the fiscal policy, and just such kinds of legislation. Give the people fair play in the election of their representatives, and they will cure all the rest. When recently the Republican party in the United States, who occupy very much the position of the Tory party in Canada, who regard themselves as the natural owners of the country, and as having the right to control its destinies, and as the born legislators of the country—when the Republican party sought by an act of Congress to become a permanent fixture in the controlling influence of that great country by means of the Force Bill,—when they sought to take possession of the electoral franchise of the United States, the people rose in their might and told Congress “we will never submit to it: we have had a rebellion in the south about the slaves, we will have no rebellion about the Force Bill.” Not only the south but the people of other parts of the Republic rose in their manhood and said: “It is true the Republican party may carry that in Congress, but they cannot carry it if they appeal to the country—there will be a disruption if they do.” Had the electorate, when the Conservative party in this country robbed them of their franchise, risen in their might, our people to-day would be more contented. You cannot point to any other democratic form of government where there has been so large an infraction of the rights of the people as in Canada. The Government have taken possession, I say, of the representation of the people. They first appoint an officer who says who shall be put on the voters’ lists. He is their own creature, selected by themselves. Having

obtained the lists, what is done? Do they trust them to be examined in their own counties? No, they bring the lists to Ottawa, to the Printing Bureau, and print them under their own direction. I may be told that I must not make charges. Do you think you can gag the people of Canada by any such remarks, when they know and have proof of so many dishonest things in connection with the representation of the people? I say the Government should place itself beyond suspicion. I do not mean to make any charge, but the Government cannot be surprised that charges of that character are made when we know the lengths to which they go in order to secure the return of their own candidates. Having framed the lists, having carved out constituencies as they have done every ten years to suit their own people, they appoint the returning officers, and so practically what is known in the United States as the Force Bill has been in existence in the Dominion, and that is the cause of the unrest and the dissatisfaction, and the reason why so many people are threatening to leave this country, and why so many have left the Dominion—because they think the Government have seized on the rights of the people and have taken control, in a tyrannical or arbitrary way, of the representation of the people in Parliament. The Government dare not trust the people. Surely, if they enjoyed the confidence of the majority in this country, they need not fear to let the people of the various localities make their own lists. Are the Conservatives in the electoral divisions not equally as intelligent, on the alert and keen for success as are their neighbours, the Reformers? They are on the same parallel, only the Conservatives have friends at court, and the Reformers have not. If you want to secure peace and good feeling in this country, you have to put the representation of the people on a more just, fair and equitable basis than it is. Do that, and in my humble judgment you will remove one of the great causes of dissatisfaction and stop the exodus. You will find in the next ten years our population will have grown—that we will have attracted population from the other side of the line. As I said before, Canada is a grand country, it has a magnificent North-west, and it is our duty to take care of it and to hand it down to posterity as we received it from those who preceded us. If we pursue a fair, just and reasonable policy,