

been deprived. He knows that the Liberal-Conservatives in Nova Scotia have introduced legislation to restore to those officials the franchise, and that that legislation has always been defeated by the gentleman who is Finance Minister of Canada to-day and the party who followed him. But when the occasion came, when the Liberal-Conservative party held control of the lower branch of the legislature, and when they passed an Act to restore that privilege, they failed to carry it into law, because the legislative council, which remained under the control of Mr. Fielding and his friends, refused to allow the lower branch of the legislature to do the act of justice. More than that, this hon. gentleman, who speaks so warmly of the improper conduct of his opponents, who sets up himself and his party as exemplars of the highest virtue and purity, did not hesitate to gerrymander the various counties of Nova Scotia in order to affect the political complexion of the county councils. They have not stopped at even smaller acts. They even passed an Act to prevent a political opponent from holding the small office of clerk of a county council in some cases. In one of the counties of Nova Scotia, first of all, in order to strike at one individual, an Act was passed declaring that no member of the Dominion House of Commons or Senate could hold the office of clerk of the county council. Then a new Act was passed providing that the partner of such an individual could not hold that office; and, to show to what an extreme of smallness these men are capable of descending, in spite of all their protestations of political virtue, they finally passed an Act providing that the clerk or employee of such a person could not be a clerk of the county council. I think this House ought to be grateful indeed to the hon. gentleman for giving it an opportunity to discover the breadth of statesmanship displayed by the Liberals of Nova Scotia. Now, Sir, I think I am perfectly safe in saying that I can repel with the utmost confidence the charge that the Liberal-Conservative party ever terrorized or attempted to terrorize over or interfere with any Dominion official whatever in the exercise of his franchise. I think I have made a very good case to show the character of these gentlemen who attempt to make these charges, presuming that because they are a thousand miles from the scene of their operations, distance may give them some security; but I think the evidence I have adduced here, which is incontrovertible and which is recorded in the statutes of the province of Nova Scotia, shows that these gentlemen are capable of descending to any base use of the legislature of a country over which they may have obtained control, for party advantages. But it may be said that possibly these gentlemen are honest and in earnest, that their zeal to disfranchise Dominion officials grew out of love and regard for those officials. Do they not say that those officials came to them in tears im-

Mr. BELL (Pictou).

ploring to be protected; but, marvellous to relate, those bowels of compassion which they feel impelled to exercise towards their opponents are not moved at all in the case of their own supporters. The Dominion officials were protected by these gentlemen, but the local officials, of whom there are a great many more, were left unprotected. Marvellous to relate, though they came to these gentlemen on their knees and implored for protection, they were left to suffer from the evil consequences of having the franchise. The truth of the matter is that in this as in every other matter in which the two parties come into comparison and contrast, the professions of the Liberal party stand in inverso ratio to their performances. The more they cry purity, the less trouble you will have to discern the absence of whiteness on their shield; the more loudly they proclaim their adherence to everything good and pure, the more hastily you will button up your pocket, the more you will be on the alert, and the more carefully you will watch them, because the louder their assertions the worse their practices.

I have devoted as much time to the hon. gentleman and his career in Nova Scotia as is becoming, but I may say there are several chapters of these reminiscences which may be drawn upon, if necessary, in the future. Let us revert to the cause of our being engaged in this controversy now. What is it? It is the declaration of the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Blair) that, so far as he is concerned, and so far as he represents the Government of Canada, there is one unfortunate class in this country that does not appeal to them for protection or sympathy, or, even justice. What class is that? Is it the class that is best able to sustain the storms of evil fortune? Is it the class that is best able to protect itself? Is it the class that has the most resources to fall back on in the day of disaster? No, but, wonderful to relate, this Liberal Minister of Railways and Canals, this Minister of a Liberal Administration, coolly and in the most callous and heartless manner, affirms that where the stipend, the existence, the very life of the workingman hangs in suspense, there he has not time to inquire into the matter, but he deliberately hands the unfortunate man over to the machinery of his department to be decapitated without benefit of clergy or any other benefit whatever. I need scarcely say that this is an amazing revelation to those who might have been led to believe in the past that the Liberal party stands for the principles of Liberalism. So far, however, as my political education has gone—and I do not know but that I may be open to the charge which the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. McMullen) made against the hon. member for Montreal (Mr. Quinn) to-day, that of being a chicken politician, who has no right to rise and set his opinion against the dictum of a Minister—but even if we be young in this House, we have learned in other