

trying to make noise will not prevent me from speaking. I believe they hear me well enough; my voice is strong enough to be understood, and I am going to continue in the same key. I wish to make a preliminary remark on this discussion, which may seem to have been a little too lengthy; but if it has been lengthy, this is due to the position taken by the Government. When I speak of the Government, I mean the leader of the Government, who is responsible, being the first promoter of the mode of discussion which has been followed. Hon. members on this side of the House have been charged with having been too long in their remarks, with having endeavored to obstruct legislation. The least that can be said of this attack is that it is unfair; and I may say here that if the discussion has been protracted it is due, to a large extent, to the position taken by the Government, and especially by the First Minister, who told us that he would pass the measure and force it upon us *de die in diem*, without leaving off. For my part, and I speak for myself only, I will never submit to any threat, to any violence, to any oppression.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Question.

Mr. CASGRAIN. (Translation.) As I said, we have resisted the pressure which has been brought to bear against us, and I rise again to say that I will oppose it to the bitter end. It has been attempted to wring a vote from us through length of time, by exhausting our physical strength; there was an attempt to starve us out, so to speak, but our opponents were mistaken; and if it is intended to starve us out, I believe that will be another mistake. We can perfectly well discuss the Bill as gentlemen ought to do, but not during unreasonable hours, like we did a few days ago, but during proper hours. Now, Mr. Chairman, let us consider the subject of the debate. The object of this Bill is to deprive the Province of Quebec from a right which it possesses; and I hope that the hon. members from that Province will break the silence which they have observed until now, saving two or three honorable exceptions, which I cannot help noticing with praise. But it seems to me that the other members who support the Government have observed a forced silence. Never since I am a member—and this is my fourth Parliament—have I witnessed such a silence, such crouching, as I witness now.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order; question.

Mr. CASGRAIN. (Translation.) The best proof of what I state is that the shots take effect. The best proof is the yells I hear from the other side of the House.

Mr. LANDRY (Montmagny). In French.

Mr. CASGRAIN. (Translation.) If the hon. member for Montmagny, instead of doing like the bird in the fable, instead of repeating what he hears, like a parrot, would himself answer the objections which have been raised against the Bill, he would do better than he does by making obstruction. But, on the other hand, if there has been obstruction, I am glad to notice—and I do not know whether a watch-word has been given—that for some time past these noises, this cock-crowing, which we were wont to hear, has ceased. But if it is intended to renew them I believe these gentlemen who are accustomed to it, who are sheep-like, will not gain much, and, for my part, it does not make a bit of difference to me.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Question, question. Speak to the amendment.

Mr. CASGRAIN. (Translation.) Well, Mr. Chairman, I was saying, when I was interrupted, that I was in hopes that the members from the Province of Quebec, on so important a question, which concerns them directly, and with regard to which they will be called to account by the electors at the next election, and even before, because it is the custom to go before one's

Mr. CASGRAIN.

constituents after the Session, to give an account of one's parliamentary conduct—I say, I believe that they will have to explain the vote which they are going to give to-day. It is true the vote will not be recorded to-day, but it will be recorded ultimately, and that record will tell who supported the amendment and who opposed it. I said that a more unpopular measure in the Province of Quebec could not be brought down; and I here declare that if I had a bad wish to make to the Government, it would be to have that measure passed, which would be the crowning point of a host of other measures which are now before Parliament and which will go further than anything else towards destroying the prestige with which the First Minister has been surrounded up to this day. Now, taking public sentiment in the Province of Quebec for a basis, I openly declare that I am happy to find, even in the ranks of the Conservative party, the real expression of the sentiments of that Province, as given a moment ago by the hon. member for Rouville (Mr. Gigault). That hon. member has explained in firm, calm and moderate language the position he has taken, and I completely endorse what he has said. I should like to hear from the other side of the House a reply which would be an answer to the arguments he has brought forward. His arguments appear to me to be incontrovertible. Will they be answered on the other side? I do not know; but if the obstinate silence which has been kept until now is persisted in, it is quite clear that hon. gentlemen will not try to answer them, or will refuse to answer them. I was struck—I am still struck—with the enormity of the cost which this change of system will involve. Taking, for the five years, the minimum of the costs of the preparation of the lists at \$300,000 for each year, for the counties, you will have \$1,500,000 of expenses, merely to have the voters' list for a new Parliament. I say this expense is entirely out of proportion to the resources of the country. I do not even add the ordinary expenses of the whole number of general elections which will take place, and which will necessitate another expense of \$300,000 to \$400,000. So that, if we reckon up the bye-elections, we have an amount of nearly \$2,000,000. I say this is out of proportion with the resources of the country. Now, why should we change the present system? Is there any advantage whatever to do this? The only advantage is that which the Government hopes to get out of this law. There is no other for the Province of Quebec, nor for the other Provinces in Canada. As to the clause concerning qualification, a mechanic, a school teacher, a good citizen, will be deprived of their right of voting, and an Indian, who will happen to own a small property, worth \$300 or \$400 will be brought forward and put alongside of the civilised and reasonable man who has a direct interest in the State. Our population is going to revolt against such a proposition, and I believe that it has a perfect right to do so. Mr. Chairman, I believe that if we would only give to the people of the country time enough to express their opinion we would receive, before long, a host of petitions against this Bill. The more it is known in some Provinces the more it is unpopular. And if the discussion is prolonged for some time yet, I am sure that the Province of Quebec—as the Province of Ontario has already done—will not fail to send in its protestation against the Bill which is now submitted to us. Perhaps before the end of this Parliament we will have occasion to receive a host of petitions, which will express the views of the people on this question; but still, if the people cannot be warned and informed in proper time on the true bearing of this law, at least during vacation, I have no doubt, that a host of petitions will be sent to the new Parliament, asking for the repeal of the law. Now, as the Government wanted, on this occasion, to create a precedent, by depriving Prince Edward Island of its electoral franchise, I believe I can see what is the intention of the Government towards the Pro-