

cessary, then, to pass this Act which he has just now read? It was necessary to enfranchise these parties who had been disfranchised by the law of Nova Scotia.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I will answer the question of my hon. friend by saying that it was not necessary to pass this law. If the names were on the list, and it is not disputed that they were on the list, will my hon. friend (Sir Charles Tupper) say how came in the disfranchisement.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. What was the need of the law if they were not disfranchised?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I say there was no necessity for it. My hon. friend has not answered the question, if the names were on the lists and it is shown that they were, will he tell how it was that they were disfranchised in the Dominion election?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. In this way—while the lists for the local election were the lists for the Dominion election, and the lists from the local preventing these parties from voting, it became necessary, this Parliament was compelled in fact, in defence of the rights of the people of Nova Scotia who were disfranchised, to pass this Act.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. My hon. friend (Sir Charles Tupper) says that the provincial lists prevented them from voting. That would be a very strong argument only that the hon. gentleman is misinformed as to the facts, for, as I have shown, the local lists did not prevent them voting. The lists contained the name of every Dominion official who was qualified to vote by his property or otherwise in the usual way. That was the list, the official was not disqualified by having his name left off the list and there was no other disqualification. The facts show from the beginning disqualification of Dominion officials was merely a freak of the imagination. Hon. gentlemen have heard the statement and I challenge contradiction of it—that the names of Dominion officials were never left off the lists under the provincial law, and the names being on the lists the parties were entitled to vote in the Dominion election. There was never any need for the passing of the Act of 1882. Hon. gentlemen opposite have pleaded that the Dominion Franchise Act was necessary by reason of the fact of this disqualification in Nova Scotia. I pointed out that the disqualification, as respects the Dominion lists never existed, because the names were on the list, and, second, if by any possibility the names had been left off the list, then, three years before the Franchise Act was passed, this Parliament had passed an Act which would meet the difficulty and give these men their votes. The argument, therefore, that three years later you had to pass a Dominion Franchise Act

Mr. FIELDING.

to get names on the Dominion lists which were already on the provincial list entitling the parties to vote in Dominion elections, shows that that is a mere delusion. If any of the facts that I have stated, which I state in good faith, are disputed, I shall be glad if any hon. gentleman will show, either now or at a later stage in what respect they are inaccurate.

Before resuming my seat, I desire to say a word with regard to the matter on which the lists are made up in Nova Scotia. They are made up by the municipalities. The idea that one would infer from statements that were made that these lists were made up by the local government or by parties interested in the local government are not well founded. I represented the metropolitan constituency of Halifax in the provincial parliament for many years. During that time, the municipality of Halifax was about evenly divided. Perhaps at one time the Conservatives predominated and at another the Liberals. I have never heard any difficulty about the lists. There may have been in some cases partisan revisers; that would happen in any case. I have heard of partisan revising officers under the Dominion law, though I do not make the charge that I personally know of any such. The lists in Nova Scotia were made up, on the whole, free from partisanship—practically, of course, not absolutely. I speak as one who was elected time after time on lists prepared under the direction of officers appointed by a Conservative council, and made, I believe, in the main, fairly. With regard to the Dominion Franchise Act, whatever difference of opinion there may be as to what is the proper basis of the franchise, public opinion has reached the conclusion that, in nearly all the provinces, the difference between the Dominion and the local franchises is so unimportant that there is no excuse for keeping up the organizations and undertaking the expense for two lists. Inasmuch as that is the most convenient in the interests of economy and the convenience of candidates, committee men and officials, and all those who spend time and money in making out lists, inasmuch as the convenient way is to make the reform by doing away with the Dominion lists, I think the public will decide that the Bill is in the right direction.

Mr. MILLS. I wish to say but one word. I agree absolutely with what the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) has stated, for it has never been stated in this House, to my knowledge, that the local law of Nova Scotia disfranchised Dominion officials in elections for members of this House.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Why, then, was this Act passed in 1882?

Mr. MILLS. But what was the practical operation of that law as carried out by ignorant revisers. The effect was this—when