

Mr. CHARLTON. If the hon. Minister of Justice is not willing to accept the Bill or to submit it to a committee to see whether it can be made acceptable, I submit to his decision and will withdraw it. I must say, however, in justice to myself, that the reasons urged against the Bill, many of them, I am not able to see the weight of. In every state in the American Union the revision of the lists takes place immediately before the elections, and it is held wrong to hold an election on a list even three months old. I think it is not an objection to this Bill to say that a revision of the Dominion lists might take place on the first of January, and then an election be held six months later on provincial lists revised a couple of months later than the first of January, but on the contrary that is a recommendation. It is an advantage to have an election on lists revised one month previously rather than on those revised seven months previously. I do not see any advantage in the Dominion franchise, with regard to equalization over the provincial lists. There is as much inequality under the Dominion Franchise as in the franchises of the various provinces. Under the Dominion Act, there is universal suffrage in some provinces and not in others, and there are different property qualifications in different provinces, so that no claim of uniformity can be made with regard to the Dominion lists in preference to the provincial lists. I believe the most recent lists should be used, as it is not in the public interest to use a list seven months old in preference to one revised but a month previous to the election. Although the object of the Bill is to provide for cases where a greater disparity exists than that, I do not believe the objection made can lie against the measure. Of course, I hold that the provincial franchises are, on all occasions, preferable to the Dominion franchises. I hold that we should go back to the provincial lists and that any step in that direction is in the right direction; but of course I bow to the decision of the Minister of Justice, and will give him not only three months but twelve months to consider it.

Amendment (three months' hoist) agreed to.

PREVENTION OF FRAUDS.

Mr. BURDETT moved second reading of Bill (No. 42) to prevent fraud in the sale of certain articles. He said: I cannot speak for the eastern or western provinces, but I know, as a matter of fact, that very extensive frauds have been committed on the farming community in the central part of Ontario by men who have sold hulless oats and other seed grain to farmers, obtaining from them promissory notes, the sellers giving the farmers bonds to purchase in the fall the produce of the seed grain so sold. For example, they will get a farmer to buy ten bushels of hulless oats at ten dollars per bushel, taking his note for a hundred dollars. They will then give him a bond to take back twenty bushels of the proceeds of those oats in the fall at ten dollars a bushel and to sell the balance of the crop produced from that ten bushels at \$7.50 per bushel, the farmer allowing 25 per cent. commission. When the fall comes round, these parties will redeem their bond by selling the crop to the neighbouring farmers on similar terms, being thus enabled to hand over to the first farmer sufficient notes or money

Mr. SPROULE.

to cover their indebtedness. Thus, they can go on perpetrating the fraud, and in the county from which I come it has been carried on for three years. Last year public attention was drawn to it by newspapers in the city of Belleville, and the schemers had to leave the country. Still, frauds to a very great extent were committed there. I think I am within the bounds when I say that in the neighbourhood of one hundred thousand dollars has been taken out of the community in this way. That scheme has been practised of late in other parts of Ontario. This same class of men will go to a farmer and dispose of an article, say a piano, and get the farmer to sign a document by which he agrees to assist in selling four on condition that he will then become the owner of the one in the house. Another agent will soon come along and the farmer will find that he has signed an absolute order for the piano at a price of, say, \$480, for which the agent will insist on his giving a promissory note, and all he will have in return is a bass-wood box filled with penny whistles. I propose to meet that class of frauds, first, by preventing any person from taking notes or other securities for the sale of cereals or other grain, or musical instruments, or farm implements, where the sale is of a fictitious character, or at double the market value of the article sold. I propose also to reach the case of persons who give bonds to become agents for selling this class of property. I propose to make guilty of misdemeanour all those who, knowing the character of those notes, receive or dispose of any notes or securities they may get in that way, or that they may get by reason of their becoming agents to sell for the farmers. This Bill reaches the case completely and in saying that I speak with knowledge of the law of which it is a transcript. This is virtually taken from the statutes of Ohio, where similar frauds were committed for a number of years, and where it was found effectual in putting down that class of fraud. It is true our court of appeal has held that the persons to the original transaction, those who had knowledge of the character of the notes and the transaction, could not recover from each other, but that if the notes had fallen into the hands of an innocent purchaser, they would have to be met at maturity. I may also state that I understand from the legal gentleman who argued the case in the Court of Appeal in Ontario, that it was suggested by the court it was time a law of this nature was passed. I know of the case of a man who is to-day in prison for having carried out one of those piano transactions, but under another section of the criminal law, he having been indicted for fraud. I trust the Minister of Justice will permit this Bill to become law. It can do no injustice to honest dealers, as it only treats of cases where property is sold at a fictitious price or at a price double its value. I trust, therefore, there will be no serious opposition to this Bill. It is in the right direction, and I believe its passage will deter men from going into similar transactions and being robbed. It may be said that anyone who enters into such a transaction and makes a note of this kind is served right if he gets beaten. That is true to a certain extent, but a man's folly often reaches further than himself. His wife and family who have done more than he has to make the farm valuable may suffer, and thus innocent people may be wronged.