

than there, and very little probability that for centuries, if ever, this can be otherwise. (Hear, hear.) In the Mother Country the ratio of property-holders to the population has been steadily decreasing for centuries. At the close of the 11th century, in England, William the Conqueror had a general survey made of all the lands in the kingdom, and out of a population of about one and a-half million the landholders numbered 45,706. In 1688, six centuries after the death of William, out of a population of five and a-half millions the freeholders numbered only from 160,000 to 170,000; and in 1861 the census in Great Britain show that while the population in England was twenty millions or a little over, the landed proprietors had decreased to only 39,776; so that the whole landed property of England is owned by less than one-sixth hundred and fifty-third part of the people. And yet, in view of this fact, the last Reform measure, which so largely admitted to the franchise the working classes, as well as the Act of 1832, has not, in the least, jeopardized or damaged the interests of the landed proprietors. If so little to fear there, how much less here, where owners of real estate are so immensely in the majority? (Hear, hear.) Neither in this, nor in any other country of which I have any knowledge, have the persons that would be admitted by this Bill to the franchise, given the least ground to suppose that its possession would be abused, nor that it was not perfectly safe to entrust them with it. (Cheers.) 3. Another objection is that they do not yet possess that fitness which would qualify them for the exercise of the franchise, and that were they admitted to it they would be coerced into voting one way rather than another. It is at once admitted that if fitness is to be gauged by the possession of real estate or its occupancy, the objection is well taken; but surely no one in this age, in this country, would be supposed to lay down as an unbending iron rule what even thoughtful and leading men in England have abandoned—the country, Sir, from which we profess to take our political inspiration, and upon whose constitutional maxims and practices we so largely depend for guidance. The march of public opinion in the United Kingdom has alike influenced the men of the two great political parties in that country, for leading statesmen on both sides have given in their adhesion, long since, to the doctrine which is now being advocated—that occupation and tenure are not the only tests of fitness for the franchise. In the year 1854, Lord John Russell proposed a Reform Bill, in which several new franchisees were to be added so as to modify the hard uniformity of the household franchise—a salary of £100 a year—an income of £10 a year from dividends—the payment of forty shillings in certain taxes—a degree at any of Universities, and £50 in a Savings Bank. Then in 1859, by the Government of Lord Derby, that noble Lord, being then the leader of the great Conservative party, a Bill was introduced, the principles of which were explained by Mr. Disraeli. It was proposed, with other changes, to give the franchise to those possessed of £10 a year from dividends, £60 in a Savings Bank, or a pension of £20 lodgers paying £20 a year, graduates of all Universities, ministers of religion of every denomination, members of the legal profession in all its branches, registered medical practitioners, and school masters holding a certificate from the Privy Council were to be entitled to vote wherever they were resident. Mr. Gladstone, on the 12th March, 1866, in speaking about the Savings Bank franchise, used the following words:—"It has those advantages, first of all, as far as it goes it meets a feeling prevalent in the country, and a feeling to which we are disposed to give effect as far as we can without the sacrifice of more important ends and aims, a feeling that it is desirable to include within the constitutional body by the method of what I might call spontaneous selections, some who could not be included by any other method of franchise you could adopt, founded upon the old principle of occupation and tenure." Now, certainly it is true, it must be true, it is beyond all reasonable doubt or question, although the nature of Savings Banks does not allow us to offer any demonstration of it, it is true without any doubt that prudent habits enable many persons in early youth, many in very humble circumstances, many not having any independent holding, to amass their little stores by the time they come to legal age, and thereby as we think qualify themselves for taking part in the choice of those who are to govern the country." And Mr. Disraeli says, "This public function should be conferred on those who fulfil public duties. It is not merely contributing to the public funds, but bearing public burdens, which cannot be borne without the fulfilment of a public duty, and being placed in a position in life which admits of the performance of the duties of citizenship, which qualify for the exercise of this function." Further—"I think I have a right to say with confidence that on the whole the payment of rates is a very fair test of propriety of conduct on the part of the person who exercises that function, more especially if, though adopted as a first element of the qualification in the franchise, it be accompanied by a condition of an adequate period of residence." Sir, I should be chargeable with an attempt to degrade the franchise, in the extension aimed at in the Bill now before the House, did I not avail myself of the safe-guards suggested by the words of the right hon. gentleman whom I have just quoted, namely, payment of rates and residence. The franchise may be viewed in a two-fold aspect—as a trust and as a right. As a trust, our whole system of laws aim at fitting men for its possession and its exercise, our municipal laws, our educational system, aim at producing or begetting fitness, and when we have trained them—are training them for the use and for the possession of political power—we deny them what has become theirs as a right, because they meet the conditions of fitness. Many of these showed they were fit to be trusted in the defence of the country; they proved they were fit to hold the character of the children of the land. They have tested their ability and skill in manipulating nice questions of finance; have proved their knowledge of the principles of commerce and the currents of trade to be correct; have discussed and solved mechanical problems; have tested their fitness in the use of square and compass, and in those handicrafts by which their competence to earn a comfortable living has

been put beyond conjecture. They have proved their ability to bear and meet taxation, carry a public burden, and, as the result of the use of brain and muscle, add yearly to the capital of the country. And yet in the sense hitherto of the law, they are not fit to be trusted in saying who shall govern the country; not fit to mould the character of our institutions; not fit to decide political questions, nor to solve administrative problems; not fit to apply the principles of common sense and honesty to the solution of constitutional difficulties, nor of any more use than, like beasts of burden, to add to other's wealth and the country's capital. (Cheers.) Sir, if these are the feelings of this Legislature towards this class of men—if this be the estimate put upon what they are, what they have done, what they are capable of doing, the very walls of this chamber would cry out shame, for it would be a shame to think or say that men so fit, are not fit; that the mere occupancy of a little tenement rated so as to come within the limit of the franchise, makes its occupant, who may be ignorant—who may be unable to write or read, and in a moral point of view, worse—more worthy of the franchise than men a thousand fold his superior. Neither property nor rank; neither character nor religion, forbid their exclusion, nor prove their unfitness. But it may be said that to be consistent, I should have provided that all who pay taxes on income, irrespective of the amount rated, should have a vote, especially as the fitness laid down will be found to exist among those not rated for the amount named in the Bill. With equal propriety, I might, in reply, say—why not give the franchise to all real estate holders or owners, irrespective of the amount for which they may be rated on the assessment roll? The reason to be given for not doing this, will fully answer any charge of inconsistency that may on this score be brought against the Bill. And the reason is simply this: that while the spirit of the Constitution aims at fitness in the possessor of the franchise, it does something more. It seeks to preserve a balance in the representation of the country by declaring who are voters—dealing with the matter as a question of degree, that all above a certain amount are so, and all below are not. If all who are rated for real estate, irrespective of some fixed sum, had the franchise, the balance of power would be much more unequal than it now is; the inequality of the thing would be more intensely aggravated; and exactly is it on the same principle that, with regard to men rated for income, I venture to draw the line. As to the fear of coercion being employed to compel men to vote one way rather than another, this is mere conjecture. Without doubt cases would occur where pressure brought to bear upon employees, might have this effect; but if this be a well-founded objection against the recognition of income franchise, it is equally forcible as against employees enjoying household franchise. But is it a matter of fact that coercion generally prevails now as respects employees. Not so, and even if there were instances here and there—where it was resorted to—these exceptional cases would not, nor could they violate the general rule. I have known men assert their independence and maintain it at all hazards; and more, I think it a shallow argument indeed, to suppose that employers consult their own interests so lightly that useful servants, useful assistants should be turned off because of the use of their liberty and the assertion of freedom of opinion. In engaging a clerk or a teacher, labourer or a mechanic, a foreman or a manager, who is there that allows political reasons for one moment to enter into the estimate of the value or work of these to an employer, or allows such a consideration to determine a choice of persons. The case was well put when the following words were used on this point—"As a rule, the mercantile and professional classes of employers are very little disposed to inquire into the political faith of their servants: no more in fact than into their religious creeds. The principal aim of such is doubtless to get good and reliable workmen and clerks, and if they get these, we venture to think they trouble themselves very little about the other question." Even that such a thing were possible, or that employers were disposed to use coercion, does it follow that for this there were no remedy? In the United Kingdom, now under the working of the law "for the prevention of corrupt practices at Parliamentary elections," coercion or intimidation unseats the candidate on whose behalf they may have been employed. In this country a similar remedy could easily be applied to a corresponding practice. (Hear, hear.) 4. It has been urged that these men, not having a sufficient stake in the country, should not enjoy the franchise. I have yet to learn that the mechanic, earning from eight to ten or twelve dollars a week, and who by the sweat of his brow is adding to the public wealth that those who aid others in building colossal fortunes—that the accountant who by his skill in financial operations assists his employer to reap golden harvests—that teachers who by educating the youth of the land, are laying foundations of solid and permanent advancement—and that the labourer, who by his manual force subdues the soil or brings out of the forest its valuable products—has a less stake in the country than the man who happens in a city to occupy a tenement rated at four hundred dollars, or in a town at three hundred dollars, or in the country leases land rated at two hundred dollars. If comparison is to be made at all, take position, character, utility, usefulness take results as the criterion of value, as the test of stake, and if the one does not equal the other in merit, then I know not what a stake in the country means. Not a sufficient stake in the country! The proposition is grossly absurd. Where would he, or whence would come, the motive for these men to act in opposition to the well being of this Province? Their all is dependent upon the stability of our institutions. Their daily bread, the settlement of themselves in life, the husbanding of the resources of old age, all depends upon their fidelity to the country, to our constitution. Is not this a stake? (Hear, hear.) They know full well what underlies commercial, manufacturing and agricultural prosperity, what affects profits. They understand to a certain extent the currents of trade, what conserves labour, what influences control the laws of demand and supply, and above all what affects the credit of the country. It is their interest more than even those who revel in wealth,

or possess it more moderately, that permanence and progress be stamped upon every undertaking that has for its object the material advantage of the country. It is to their interest that vice be repressed and social order prevail, that economy in the Administration of the country exist, that public burdens be lessened, that the rights of property be respected, and the laws of the land be maintained. Is it not true—it must be true—that what affects their interests will regulate their conduct, that what determines their future conduct, will be the maxims that guide them and their modes of life (Hear) Having thus noticed some of the principal objections which may be presented against the Bill, a brief reference may be made to the grounds on which the admission of these men to the franchise is, not only right, but just. On the ground of their value to the State, and what they directly contribute to its requirements; because their exclusion is not equitable, on the ground that there is no connecting link between this class and the representatives in this House; and no responsibility, because without it there cannot be representative harmony as between this class and other classes; on the ground of their pursuits in life, because their admission will give strength to our free institutions; and on moral grounds. A few remarks on each of these points—and I will have done. 1st. As to their value to the State, and what they contribute to its requirements. If they were paupers and a burden to the country, rather than a benefit to it; were they a drain upon its resources, rather than contributors to these resources, then I could understand why their exclusion from the franchise might be justified. But when in every sense, as far as required, they sustain our institutions and furnish their share of the revenue, both for local and general purposes, we cannot be far astray in finding an estimate by which their value to the country may be determined. Their contributions, however, are not to be calculated by mere dollars and cents, for they are contributors in all that make a nation great; and not the least of these—force of character, mental power, skill, energy, endurance and enterprise—qualities without which a nation, while rich, is poor; however proud, is menial. Not only are their possessions—their earnings—everything they have, in a certain sense—pledged, in proportion to their ability, to meet every demand of the State; but life and limb are pledged. (Cheers.) 2. Their exclusion is not equitable. Discharging, up to the measure of their ability, every claim presented them, and in not a few instances what they give being largely in excess of what many who possess the franchise contribute, their anomalous position is one of extreme inequality. Denial to these, who pay more—fill positions of trust, are educators, as compared with those who pay less, occupy but very subordinate positions in life, and comparatively know much less—is virtual degradation. This wholesale proscription is not fair; nor is it, in the judgment of the great political parties of England, just. In Australia, in Victoria—British Colonies—the ban has been removed; and, to come nearer home, in Nova Scotia the disparity of this thing has been wiped out. "There ought to be no pariahs in a full grown and civilized nation: no persons disqualified, except through their own default. (Cheers.) 3. There is no connecting link between this class, and the representatives in this House, hence, and as far as these are concerned, no representative responsibility. As far as these men are concerned, they cannot in the true sense of representation, be said to be represented in this Chamber, inasmuch as they have no way at the polls of giving expression to their opinions; nor can they potentially express their approval or disapproval of laws which may very materially affect their interests. It will not meet the difficulty by saying, that as long as the Government of the country is well administered, it is a matter of little importance who choose the representatives; that as long as good laws are made, and no oppression, more need not be required. However this may be, it is very certain that where a people possess the right to self-Government, the right to govern themselves,—they cannot be said to have this if denied the privilege of choosing those who make laws for them. On this point it may be as well to quote the opinions of gentlemen in England, belonging to different political sides. Sir Hugh Cairns, Conservative, says:—"The principle as I understand it is that Parliament shall be the mirror—a representation of every class—not according to heads; not according to numbers; but according to everything that gives weight and importance in the world without—so that the various classes of the country may be heard, and their views expressed fairly in the House of Commons, without the possibility of any one class outnumbering and reducing to silence all the other classes in the Kingdom." (Howard, 1866, page 1463.) And Lord John Russell, Reformer, says "The representative body should be the image of the represented: not that it should represent property only, or farmers, or merchants, or manufacturers, or multitudes only; not that it should govern with the pride of an insulated autocracy; or be carried to and fro with the breath of transient popularity; but that it should unite somewhat of all these things and blend their various colours into an agreeable picture." 4. Without the adoption of the franchise there cannot be representative harmony between this class and other classes. Not only is it of importance that a Representative Assembly be a mirror of the people; it is equally so, that in the constitution of the Assembly there be, as near as may be, an equal appointing for an expression of opinion. Without this there cannot be representative harmony. Without it there will be lacking elements of completeness in the body represented. Experience teaches that those who possess power have more respect paid them than those who have not; and that the interests of those who have votes are more generally consulted than those who have not. This frequently being the case, we find not a little distrust existing as between the various classes of the people. In England in this way, the mechanic came to distrust the property holder, the workman, the manufacturer; and is there not room, as things now are, even in this Province, for taxed income men to distrust real estate occupiers having votes when they see how readily representa-

tives to secure these votes give to them attention which too often is denied those having no votes. For this there cannot be any excuse; for there should be no opportunity. I do not mean for one moment to insinuate that this or any other representative body would knowingly make unequal laws; but this I do say, that the sooner we break down the barrier existing in this connection between the people, the sooner all classes will come practically to feel how close is the community of interests that exists between them. 5. Their pursuits in life strengthen their claim to the boon sought. In these there is found everything that entitles them to a share in the government of the country. Look at the duties of citizenship which they discharge. As teachers they educate our youth; are charged with the training and discipline of the young and rising generation; are moulding their character. As volunteers they devote their time to preparations for defence of home, altar, and country; and hold themselves in readiness at the note of alarm to take the field. As filling positions in our Banks, they are entrusted with the discharge of responsible duties, and deal with questions of finance. As assisting in our commercial offices, warehouses, and stores, they do what they can to add to the public wealth and general prosperity. As working in our manufactories, mills, workshops, and factories, they are building up the trade of the country, and widening the circle of our commercial relations. This class embraces many a self-made man; and for aught we can tell, has within it an embryo Elihu Barritt, Carey, or Watt, who, by the development and application of their inventive genius to the diversified wants of the country, may bring to it honour and renown. 6. Another ground, Sir, on which I would urge the claims of these men on the attention of the House is, that they would give strength to our free institutions. It may be urged that this will lead to democracy and weaken those safeguards that surround the Constitution. I apprehend a very different result. If those on whose behalf admission to the franchise is advocated were ignorant, comparatively worthless and lawless, there might be some force in the objection. But how or in what way their admission can lead to such peril, I am at a loss to conceive. The ghost, which the word democracy has been made to call up, has been doing duty one hardly knows how long. In England it has been pressed into service on every conceivable occasion when efforts were being made to widen the scope of the people's freedom. The sequel, however, has always proved that the fears indulged were a mockery and a snare. The wider the franchise of the people, the deeper has become their love to the throne; the more enlarged the liberty given, the stronger the affections of the people for our beloved Queen. It, Sir, was a gross libel upon the people of the United Kingdom to think or say that as power might be placed in their hands they would wantonly use it in destroying the institutions under which that power was given them; and equally is it a libel on the people of Ontario to say that if income franchise were recognized by law, that recognition would lead to democracy. The people of this country, without laying special claims to loyalty to our "Free Institution," may safely have said of them, that to-day they stand second to none in fealty to the Crown and devotion to the form of government they enjoy. It is a calumny to suppose, as was supposed in Great Britain, that the only defenders of the Constitution of which the country can boast are those whose right to vote rests upon the soil. Without doubt this Bill will increase the power of the people, but I deny that the possession of increased power always leads to democracy. I it did, then the fewer entrusted with it the better, for by logical sequence true safety could only be enjoyed by giving the defence of a country's institutions into the hands of an oligarchy. And why should not the power of the people be increased, if, indeed, increase in the number of votes adds to that power, when by our laws—our institutions as a whole—we are every day lessening the thread between the governed and the governing power. The old conditions of franchise, here as well as elsewhere, may have answered years ago, but these are changing every day. It will not do to say that the traditions of the Mother Country are against changes of this character; nor to plead that this is a departure from old and well-established English constitutional rules and should be avoided. The traditions of England are always in favour of the people, and English practice ever has been, though occasionally slow in its application, to gauge everything to be done, by good to the people and the stability of the Crown. These two ends are some of the great objects of a Representative Government such as ours; and to say that under every circumstance, no matter what change takes place, no matter what new demands may be created by those circumstances, those rules must be maintained, is simply absurd. What of Repeal of the Corn Laws; the Act for Catholic Emancipation; Alterations in Trade and Navigation Laws; the moulding of the Franchise; in 1832; the enlargement of it recently; the settlement of the Irish Church Question; all prove that old rules may be good for old years, old days, but not now, and the changes inaugurated have proved by experience that all these aimed at the good of the people and the stability of the Crown. In speaking of the Franchise, Mr. Gladstone is reported as having used the following words, and I may be pardoned quoting them: "Do it as if you were conferring a boon that will be felt and reciprocated in grateful attachment. Give to these persons new interests in the constitution, new interests which by the beneficent processes of the laws of nature, and Providence shall beget in them new attachments; for the attachment of the people to the throne, the institutions and the laws under which they live is after all more than gold and silver, or more than fleets and armies, at once the strength, the glory and the safety of the land." The opinion of another eminent gentleman is also pertinent to the point, and may be quoted: "Freedom and good Government, a generous policy and the devotion of rulers to the welfare of the people, are always met with general confidence, loyalty and contentment. The great ends of freedom can be attained in an enlightened