

and responsible rule approved by the judgment of the governed. The constitution having worked out the aims and promoted the interests of society, has gained upon democracy; while growing wealth and prosperity are powerful auxiliaries of constitutional government. Lord Somers, being a joint committee of the House of Lords, is reported as having said that—"The possession of the vote was the only true security which an Englishman had for the possession of life and property." As contrasted with the neighbouring Republic, our franchise is contracted—and I will not say not wisely so; but the grounds of comparison are unfavourable as respects us. The privileges of citizenship offered there as to voting, we do not offer; but we can, on a similar policy, extend our franchise—and thus root our institutions more deeply in the affections of the people. The objection which the fear of leading to democracy offers, in excluding these intelligent men from the franchise, is equally as strong against educating the masses; for it is well known that as education progresses it causes the old conditions of society to change—the under strata of society working upwards. But who is there, on this ground, would deny the people the blessings of education? A few words as to the moral grounds of the argument, and I have done. As a rule, it is not from this class that crime is recruited, nor do they people our gaols and penitentiaries. They populate the churches, and revere the Sabbath; are members of Mechanics' Institutes and Mercantile Library Associations; avail themselves of the benefit of a free press; patronize our lecture rooms; invest their savings in Building and other Savings' institutions; and number among them our embryo statesmen, lawyers, judges, ministers of the Gospel, merchants and manufacturers. It may be said that the people of Ontario would not consent to this measure. Sir, for my part, I have a higher opinion of the people of this country. Nor do I stand alone in this opinion, for Sir John A. Macdonald—a gentleman than whom probably the country does not possess a shrewder observer of the signs of the times—(Conservative cheers)—in his Election Bill introduced at the recent session of the House of Commons, proposes to give to all persons in receipt of an income of \$100 a year the right to vote. Turn my proposition round—look at it—dissect it—and having done so, with calm and dispassionate minds, uninfluenced by the glamour of party considerations, but impressed with a desire to act justly, and I fear not the result. (Cheers.)

HON. MR. CAMERON said in offering a few words in opposition to the second reading of the Bill, he did not object to the spirit or the view which the hon. member for Prescott (Mr. Boyd), had advanced in reference to the character of the class whom he wished to benefit by his measure, but he objected that the House, with all the knowledge that had been laid before it, had on two previous occasions, voted against the introduction of the measure, and he thought, therefore, that it was not desirable in the absence of further information, that it should be pressed upon their consideration on the present occasion. The arguments that had been offered to-day had been offered before; nothing new had been elicited to show that any grave injustice, or any injustice whatever, except of the sentimental character that had been referred to, had been done to the class of the community that he wished to enfranchise. In all times past, at all events in this country, the franchise had only been accorded to property, property which was of a stable nature and character, that property which was the permanent wealth of the country, which did not move from place to place and never left the country, and which when the voter left the country remained permanently added to the wealth of the country. There was no change that could be made in this matter so far as it struck his judgment, except a change from a property qualification to a universal suffrage. (Hear, hear.) It would not be gained that numbers of persons, say, in number greater than those who would be enfranchised by this measure, would still remain without the right of voting. But on what principle were they to be deprived of that right? It would not be contended that the man who had resided say five months in a district, would not be just as intelligent as a man who had resided for six months. But if they abandoned the property qualification they must in common sense go to universal suffrage. He believed that the country was by no means ripe for such a thing. (Cheers.) He would like to ask the hon. member for Prescott whether the amount of \$400 of income stood in the same value in the country as the sum of \$400 dollars of real property. Income was only certain so long as there were certain relationships between the employer and the employed; but property remained at all times. It therefore struck him that as nothing further was advanced in favour of the Bill than had been already answered, that the House should not consent to its second reading. His hon. friend (Mr. Boyd) had paid what he could not but call a very sensible compliment, coming, as it did, from a member of his particular party, to the Conservatives, and also to Sir John A. Macdonald; but because Sir John A. Macdonald had introduced a Bill into the Dominion Parliament, a measure granting the franchise to incomes, that was no reason why the present House should adopt it. If the Dominion Parliament had adopted that, and it had become the law of the land, then it might be fairly urged as an argument that it should be adopted in the Province, as it was not desirable that there should be different franchises for the representation of the people in this House and to the House of Commons. But that measure had not yet become the law of the land—it had not been pressed upon the consideration of the country, and he was not aware that there was any agitation in the country for such a measure as the hon. gentleman had introduced, to show that it was in any way desired. There had been very few petitions. During the last session of Parliament he thought there were one or two petitions presented, one of them he knew came from the city of Toronto, and this year they had had no petitions on the subject at all.

Mr. BOYD—There was no petition in favour of the Act of Confederation (Cheers.)

Hon. Mr. CAMERON said although it was true that there had been no petitions in reference to that change, yet it was also true that the question had been agitated for years

before, the only difficulty being to find out the correct change. (Cheers.) But there had been no agitation in connection with this question, and he could not conceive why the hon. gentleman had introduced the measure into this Parliament, stultifying as he did the recorded opinions of those hon. members who had voted against it before, unless he could at the same time bring forward proof of some kind to show that the vote which was given last session would be repeated unjustly in this. The gentleman who would receive the franchise through the measure of his hon. friend were not suffering any injustice, they were not overburdened by taxation more than the rest of the community, and so far as the legislation of the House last session was concerned, it had been favourable to income. The exemption had been placed at a higher amount, and he could see no reason to warrant the change proposed. Perhaps in time they might come to universal suffrage, but he hoped it would not be so. (Hear, hear.) He did not think that the example of the United States was an example that they were prepared to follow in that respect, for he heard that there was not more corrupt legislatures in the world than those of the United States. If that statement were a slander upon that body, it was one which was promulgated by the public press of that country, and probably the very circumstance that the franchise of that country was universal, and that every one had a right to vote might have led to that corruption, which he hoped and believed would never exist in the legislatures of this country. (Hear, hear.) With these few observations he thought that this Bill should not be passed by the House.

Hon. Mr. WOOD wished to say that in the Dominion Parliament, into which a Bill had been introduced as already referred to, it might be reasonable that there should be an Act with respect to the franchise for the Dominion, the provisions of which might not apply with equal force in their own Province. In Nova Scotia and elsewhere the population was less in number and more scattered, and in order to obtain a fair vote of the inhabitants it was necessary to extend the franchise to classes which it was not thought proper, with the surrounding circumstances, to extend it, and for that a Bill had been introduced to extend the franchise; but whether that Bill would become law or not, was yet to be tested. He wished to call attention to one fact, and that was, that they ought to be consistent in this matter. He believed that his training and habits of thought were as liberal as that of almost any one in the House; but he had not yet come to the conclusion that manhood suffrage should be adopted in this Province. His opinion had been, and he thought it was the opinion of both parties, for a number of years, that they had gone, if anything, a little too far in the extension of the franchise. (Hear, hear.) In Municipal institutions, where the greater part of their dealings were in the matter of finance—to which these Local Legislatures bore some resemblance, their powers being almost restricted to financial questions—no one would think of having a qualification which was not based on a property qualification; but there was some difference in the matter of the franchise in reference to the Dominion. Everyone paid taxes in the shape of customs, &c., to the Dominion, and therefore an argument might be applied to that House which would not apply with the same force with respect to the constitution of this House, or to Municipal institutions. He wanted to know from the hon. member for Prescott (Mr. Boyd) how he reconciled his high sounding sentiments which flowed from him as a diarist, with the fact that he would give the franchise to a man who simply possessed an income of \$400, while he denied it to a man who was liable to shoulder his musket against the enemies of his country. Should he not also have a vote?

Mr. McKELLAR—Certainly he should! (Cheers.)

Hon. Mr. WOOD—Well, the very moment you concede that principle, you go beyond the principle of the hon. member for Prescott, for every man who was 21 years of age, and was located in the country, was liable to be called out to defend the country. (Cheers.) Then the man who was liable to statute labour or poll tax, as well as to military duty, should most certainly have the franchise. If so, it simply comes to this, that the proposition was an arbitrary one altogether. For the reasons he had stated, and also for those which had been urged so ably by the hon. Provincial Secretary, he was opposed to the second reading, thinking that, at any rate, they might leave the question alone until they saw the action of the Dominion Parliament on it. (Cheers.)

Mr. FERRIER should vote against the Bill in consequence of the reduction in the amount of qualification, some statistics in reference to which he gave. He could not understand how any person with such a small income as \$200 a year could consider it a great grievance to be deprived of a vote. If a person were in receipt of the income proposed, he would be very well able to own or occupy property of the rental now required.

Mr. OLIVER disputed some of the statements of the hon. member for Centre Wellington (Mr. Ferrier) with reference to the amount of qualification in the Assessment Acts of last and previous years; and then proceeded to say that the hon. Secretary had asked if the supporters of the Bill would compare \$400 of actual property against \$400 of money. But it was not the intention of the Bill, which placed \$400 of income as against real property to that value. It had also been said that it should be rejected, since it had been already negatived twice by the House; but he remembered when the question had been first introduced, he voted against it on the ground that public opinion was not matured upon the question, and that it was a new thing to the House. But he was now prepared to admit, after due consideration, that the country was prepared for this extension of the franchise. He thought, also, that a line could be drawn in this description of the franchise as well as in that of property.

Hon. Mr. WOOD—But why not give it to those who are liable to military duty?

Mr. OLIVER said the line must be drawn somewhere, and could be as easily drawn in this matter as in that of real property; and this fact answered the whole of the hon. gentleman's argument that there was no

halting place between this motion and universal suffrage.

Mr. PERRY said he did not rise to oppose the second reading of this Bill, but should have great gratification in supporting it, since he discovered in it a creature of his own. He found that the words of the Bill, with the single exception of the amount mentioned, were identical with the resolutions he had the honour to move last year. (Cheers.) It had been his full intention to bring forward the matter again; but his hon. friend, the member for Prescott (Mr. Boyd) had been too quick for him. (Laughter.) They knew that the wise men came from the East, and he was glad to see that the wise man from the East had seen fit to adopt his words *verbatim*.

Hon. Mr. WOOD—Without giving quotation marks. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. PERRY said if he did not introduce the Bill, he should, however, humbly support it. (Hear, hear.) He should not trouble the House with any lengthy remarks, in consequence of the very able statement of the hon. member for Prescott. It had been asked why they should not extend the franchise to those who performed statute labour, and so forth. He could only say that he was not a believer in universal suffrage, and he thought that there must be a line drawn somewhere. Still, he did not believe that there was any benefit gained by striking out the most intelligent portion of the community from the exercise of the franchise. Speaking for his own district, he could say that the measure was a most popular one, and would when passed give the franchise to a most respectable and intelligent class of men who were now virtually disfranchised through not being possessed of real estate. He could not see any reason for denying this extension, and he could hardly believe it possible that a popular Legislature like this would reject the second reading of this popular measure. For his own part he should support the Bill through all its stages, and at every opportunity, with a great deal of pleasure. (Hear, hear.)

Hon. Mr. McMURRICH supported the Bill because he believed it extended the franchise to a class who were better able to exercise it and more worthy of it than many who now had it. With regard to the amount stated in the Bill, he would place it rather higher, but that was a matter which could be remedied in after stages; and as to the objection that this class was "here to-day and gone to-morrow," he did not think it any objection at all, because our \$30 voters were just as unstable and changeable, and even more so than the class referred to, who were composed of merchants and banking clerks, and were as respectable a body of men as could be pointed to, and as intelligent and as capable of exercising the franchise judiciously and for the benefit of the country. (Hear, hear.) He was not in favour of extending the franchise too far, and he supported the Bill because he thought it had been extended too far already. This might seem somewhat of a contradiction, but he would explain it. They gave a person a vote who paid \$30 house rent; that was not real estate, although it was professed that he did possess real property. But the fact was that it was real property and personalty combined, and if they carried out that principle completely they must give more votes to a man who owned \$10,000, than to the man who owned \$100. He thought there was no valid objection to giving the franchise to the class proposed, who were as loyal and as capable of exercising the franchise to the benefit of the country as any other class. He should support this Bill, and any one of a like character.

Mr. CLARKE said, if the present Bill was carried, it would be impossible to draw a line which would not admit to the franchise a considerable number of men whom, at present, it would be better to exclude. In this and in the old country, the sole qualification for the franchise was the ownership or occupation of real estate,—one reason of which was, that it was available to taxation; another being, that the owners and occupiers of real estate were considered the most considerable of the community that class, and whose opinions were of the greatest value. Another, and a stronger reason, was that the value of it was easily ascertainable, and with certainty, and that certainty existed in no other description of qualification whatever. The duty of the assessor in fixing the value of this description of property was easy, and could be done with certainty; but in the case proposed, the value could not be so ascertained. A man could come to the assessor, and say his income was \$400 a year, and thus claim the franchise, and the assessor could not refuse to grant it, because the fact might be alone and entirely in the knowledge of the man himself. (Hear, hear.) He claimed that the word income would bear a wider interpretation than the hon. member for Prescott put upon it. It was not only the man who received that salary every year, or whose average receipts amounted to \$400 a year, but it included anyone whose receipts from anything, or acquired in any way, amounted to that sum.

Mr. BOYD—Certainly.

Mr. CLARKE—Taken in that sense every person in the community has an income.

Mr. McKELLAR—Of how much. (Laughter.)

Mr. CLARKE said the pauper and the thief had an income. And if any person applied to the assessor, and deposed that he had a certain income, they must give him the franchise. The uncertainty of the qualification would place great opportunities for corrupt practices in the hands of unscrupulous persons who could by means of the provisions of this Bill create any number of voters. No objection could be taken to the application of persons for this franchise, because it often happened that a man's income was only known to himself; and there were also thousands of cases where men did not even know the amount of their own incomes, and who was to decide in such case. The effect of admitting the income franchise of this Bill would be almost equivalent to universal suffrage. The difference would be so slight that they might as well go the whole length of universal suffrage at once. There was no demand made for admission to the elective franchise by the classes proposed

to be admitted by this Bill. They might be subdivided into two classes—merchants' clerks, bankers' clerks, &c.—and the unsettled population who lived in saloons, hotels and boarding-houses, and might be here to-day and away to-morrow. It was claimed that the first class should be admitted on the ground of intelligence. How could we know that, except by an examination as to intellectual ability and acquirements? And such an examination was impossible. Hitherto, as regarded the franchise, intelligence had been measured by the possession of a certain amount of property, and if one of these young men had the intelligence claimed, and valued the franchise, it surely would not be difficult for him to entitle himself by acquiring the necessary amount of property. As to the second class—the shifting population—he thought there could be no greater evil than to admit them into the body politic as electors. He was not afraid of trusting the people of Canada. The present electors' body was the people of Canada—excluding only a limited class, to whom the people of Canada did not consider it safe to entrust the franchise. The member for Prescott had quoted the opinions of some eminent English statesmen in favour of an income franchise; but it should be remembered, these were merely opinions—they had not become law in England. When what were called the Fancy Franchises—including franchises of this kind—were proposed to the English House of Commons they were unanimously rejected.

Mr. GOW thought the hon. member for Centre Wellington (Mr. Ferrier) had not read the Bill correctly. As he (Mr. Gow) understood the Bill, all those rated for \$200 \$300 and \$400, respectively, would be entitled to the franchise. But by the Assessment Law only the surplus over \$400 was rated. Therefore the income, to entitle to the franchise, must be of the amounts named, in excess of \$400. (Cries of No! no!) Though this made the franchise higher than he would like to have it, he would support the Bill, being in favour of the principle, and trusting that the details might be modified in Committee. The arguments of the mover of the Bill he considered to be unanswerable, and he did not feel that they had been answered in any degree by the remarks from the other side of the House. It had been suggested by the Provincial Secretary and by the Treasurer that there could be no stopping midway between the present Bill and universal suffrage. He could not see that that argument was any more applicable to this Bill than it was to the existing system. It was said that the Bill drew an arbitrary line. The line was no more arbitrary than that of the existing franchise. When it was said that in villages 100 property under the value of \$300 would entitle to the franchise—that property of the value of \$200 would not—was not that drawing an arbitrary line? He was of opinion that the classes referred to in the Bill were fairly entitled to the franchise, and might be safely entrusted with it, whether we looked to their intelligence, their sobriety, their general good conduct, or their position in the country. The Treasurer had stated that the feeling of the country was, that we had gone a little too far already in the direction of extending the franchise. This was his (Mr. Gow's) own feeling, and he supported the Bill because he believed it would bring in a class who would act as a counterpoise to the influence of classes, whom the existing franchise had, perhaps, improperly admitted. (Hear, hear.) As regarded intelligence, there could be no comparison between the intelligence of the man who merely occupied a property worth \$300, and that of the man who was in receipt of an income of the value of \$400, \$500, or \$1,000.

Hon. Mr. WOOD—We want to encourage settlers. All that the people in receipt of incomes have to do to entitle them to the franchise, is to get a house.

Mr. GOW, in conclusion, repeated that he hoped the Bill would pass, and that to that end they would have the aid of the member for Centre Wellington (Mr. Ferrier).

COMMITTEE OF ELECTIONS.

Messrs McMurrich, Cumberland, Gov. Boyd and Clarke, were here sworn at the Clerk's table as members of the General Committee of Elections.

DEBATE RESUMED.

Mr. McCALL (Norfolk) said he had come to the conclusion to oppose this Bill. Last session the property qualification of members was done away with. He felt then that that would be a step towards a discussion of these matters, involving the extension of the franchise to universal suffrage and vote by ballot. He had heard to-day very little argument adduced in favour of extending the franchise to the class of persons referred to in the Bill. He begged to move that the Bill be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months.

Seconded by Mr. CARNEGIE.

Mr. CURRIE said he did not rise to oppose the second reading of the Bill. He did not think the member for Oxford (Mr. Perry) was entitled to all the credit of having brought forward this question. If he remembered aright it was the member for Bothwell (Mr. McKellar) who first suggested the provisions of this Bill to the Committee on Municipal Institutions. But he (Mr. Currie) would go further than this Bill. He saw no reason why an intelligent merchant carrying on business in a building which he rented from month to month, should not have the franchise, if it were given to his clerk because he had a salary of \$200. When the member for Bothwell made his proposition to the Committee, he (Mr. Currie) stated he would support it, provided he would go also for making chattel property entitle to the franchise; and he was ready to repeat that offer now. (Hear, hear.) The member for Grenville (Mr. Clarke) had laid great stress in his argument on the assertion that the assessor would be obliged to take the mere statement of the party wishing to be assessed for income. But the law gave the assessor the right to exercise his own judgment on the statement of the party wishing to be assessed.

Mr. CLARKE—How is the assessor to know?

Mr. CURRIE said the assessor in the village, township, or town, as the case might