

fair field and no favour. He referred to the injustice done to the farmer with one son, and the great preponderance given to the man with a large family. Should the father not be in harmony with his son in politics, it would be a thing that should not be seen—a son walking to the poll to kill the father's vote, on a property in which he had no vested interest. This is, virtually a Bill to provide a plurality of voting according to property. He quoted Mill upon this subject, and contended that the words of that eminent political economist were conclusive against such a measure. He repelled the idea that fraudulent practices had been resorted to by his side of the House, and said that if it had been practised by any party it was the party of the hon. gentlemen who had made the change. He said that in his county, when such cases were tried, there had not been a single vote on either side rejected. He said that where fraudulent practices had been resorted to it would be found generally in cities; so the excuse for bringing in this Bill is imaginary. Even though the practice should have prevailed that was no reason why it should be legalized. The majority of farmers' sons already have votes, and almost all farmers' sons are working with their parents under some agreement, it may be verbal, by which they participate in the profits or crops to better their condition by acquiring another farm through the means which they have helped to secure to the father. There is a broad distinction between the farmers' sons and those qualified by the income franchise, those latter being taxed, a distinction which would hold good even in manhood suffrage. He then proceeded to criticize several of the provisions of the Act—instantly section 4, which enables a younger son to go to the county judge and swear that his father's farm is under-assessed. He considered therefore that such a measure should be permissive, and the father allowed the option of giving his son a vote. He pointed out where the Act would require some amendment, taking particular exception to several parts of the oath. Acting upon the view that those in the House should judge those matters brought under their consideration to the best of their ability, irrespective of how it may affect them in the future, and even anticipating that their opponents would make political capital out of their actions upon this matter at future elections, he would vote against the measure for the reason which he had specified.

Mr. MACMAHON said that the sons of mechanics were placed differently from the sons of farmers. The sons of mechanics generally left home on their obtaining their majority, or else set up in business in the same town and were assessed as occupants, and thus were allowed to record their votes. He thought the Bill should become law.

Mr. DAWSON considered that the Bill was a step in the right direction, and that if the franchise were to be extended at all it should be among the farmers, those who cultivated the soil. It was the safest direction in which the franchise could be extended, and he (Mr. Dawson) would support the Bill. While, however, we heard a great deal about extending the franchise to mechanics' sons and other classes, no one ever said anything about a very deserving class of Her Majesty's subjects who were entirely deprived of civil rights. There were still some remnants of the races from whom we had taken the country in different districts. In his (Mr. Dawson's) constituency there were several thousands of Indians. Many of them were still in a primitive condition, but there were also many of them far advanced, and quite equal to their neighbours, and it was unfair that these people should be deprived of the franchise. The reason of this was that by the existing law the enfranchisement of the Indians was made contingent on the breaking up of their reserves, and they were so much attached to the tribal system and their old customs that they would never consent to this. This objectionable law had been in existence for a very long period, and no Indian had ever taken advantage of it. The Dominion Act of last year was a mere embodiment of the old law, and it did not make the condition of the Indians any better. As matters stood, a well-to-do Indian could not offer his vote at an election while his servants could. There were Indians very well off in Algoma, some of whom sent their children to Europe for their education and surely people so far advanced as these were should not be deprived of civil rights, because they happened to draw a small annuity for lands which they had ceded to the Government, and over

which no Government had any control. It was competent to Ontario to say who should or who should not vote within the boundaries of the Province, and he (Mr. Dawson) trusted that in any further amendment to the election law, the claims of deserving Indians who had abandoned the hunter's life and who had settled on land, built houses, and lived in every respect like white men, would not be lost sight of. Indians, when they had become educated and civilized, whether they lived on reserves or not, should have all the privileges of white men. It was contrary to the spirit of our institutions to have a people living among us to whom we refused the common rights of freemen. The Indians were a brave and intelligent race, not naturally inferior to the white man, and if we could let the few who remained feel and know that they laboured under no disadvantages, it would tend greatly to promote their civilization and advancement.

Mr. FERRIS considered the class to which the Bill referred were entitled to the relief afforded. In answering the objection made that the Bill conferred representation without taxation, he said that the father paid for the son's earnings, which was just as good as the son being assessed for the income. The country depended upon the farmers for the prosperity of the country, and he could foresee no danger in enfranchising their sons. He did not fear that the Bill would cause strife; it merely gave the farmer's son a right that he would have if he separated from his father, who was merely the trustee of a mutual and implied partnership.

Mr. MACDOUGALL (Simcoe) said he rose to oppose the Bill because of the principle involved—a new principle in the political reforms of our country. We cannot next session refuse to endorse the measure of the member for Welland if we pass this Bill, and endow this class with the franchise simply because they are born of a farmer and living after age under the roof tree. This led inevitably to universal suffrage; but he was opposed to it from experience, reading of history, and observation, it having always in the end led to disaster in the State. Even in the United States no man of intelligence was in favour of this universal suffrage. No one he had ever met, from President Lincoln down, had ever approved of it. The result had been the same in all countries where it had been tried, and now this same principle is being introduced into this country. Has this question agitated the mind of the country? He had never seen it. Any measure which affects the people should be submitted to the people and time allowed for its discussion. He found a universal expression of disgust at this measure in his constituency, which is to a large extent agricultural. He said that the gentlemen introducing this Bill were guilty of a political crime. He would trace the history of the Bill. Mr. Blake, then a young and enthusiastic politician, in a political speech at Aurora, produced with a great flourish a large number of what he called pressing reforms; among them he suggested this farmers' son franchise. One clause of the Bill was that it should come into effect in 1878. What was that for? It is not for the members of this House, but it is for the Dominion. The Reform party in power now will then have to give an account to the people of its actions, and the Bill introduced in this quiet way is intended to create an additional class of voters for 1878; and they have a hope that this new class will then record their votes for their political friends. They thought that the income franchise would strengthen their party, but this political move did not work successfully, so they propose now to balance this by the new franchise. He thought, however, that they would find that this again would be a mistake. He then gave his experience in London at the first test of the Ballot Act, just to abate a little the confidence with which the members of the Government anticipate the operation of this measure in their favour. We had passed no Bill like this before, and after we have given the franchise to this class we can never take it back. He objected to the extending of the franchise to a class which is paying no portion of the public burdens, and has no stake in the country. He was a farmer's son himself, and he made bold to say that the average class of farmers' sons was not the best class of people to endow with such a franchise. Those farmers' sons who stay at home are the dull boys, still tied to their mothers' apron strings, and not the clever, stirring, active young men who go forth to rush their way in the world.