

## THE FRANCHISE.

It is stated that the City Council of Toronto will petition Parliament to refuse the franchise in a war-time election to any voter born in an enemy country who has lived in Canada less than twenty-five years, and who is not a soldier or the parent of a soldier. The proposal is not commendable. Persons of enemy nationality in Canada at the outbreak of war who had not taken the oath of allegiance have been interned, and, in any event, could not exercise the franchise, while persons of German or Austrian birth resident in Canada previous to August, 1914, and who had taken the oath of allegiance would seem as much entitled to enjoy the franchise as any other class. There must be thousands of Germans and Austrians in Canada, as in the United States, whose sympathies are with the country of their adoption. They have come to Canada as to a free country where equal rights prevail, and if during the war they have committed no unpatriotic act, nor been guilty of treasonable utterance, it does not seem fair that they be deprived of the privileges of citizenship, a voice in the government of the country which is to be the home of their children's children. It would be rather incongruous to deprive naturalized German Canadians of those very rights of democracy and those free institutions to obtain which the flower of the Empire are sacrificing their lives in France. Moreover, when the war is over, Canada will need immigration, all of it we can get, and to tell the old-world emigrant that the tenure of political rights in this country is precarious is hardly calculated to induce him to settle in the Dominion.