

not expect an answer, but I gave the hon. gentleman a chance to make a reply. The right hon. gentleman asked me about the point, as I said I held an opinion, and I gave my views frankly and fully. I said I believed that if any Government endeavoured to pass a prohibitory law it should be with a majority of the voters on the list in its favour. Some hon. members laughed and said that the Premier had roped me in, that I had let him out of the hole, and so on. Those are my views, however, and they have been my views for years, and I wanted to state them here so as to show that I am not sailing under false colours, either with the temperance people or others, and I wanted to show where I stand. In order to prove that these views have not been adopted by me lately, and have not been adopted since I rose to discuss the question, and not put forward at the moment, in the innocence of my heart, I wish to read a short extract from a speech I delivered on February 24th, 1896. I then said :

I claim that the prohibitory law must have a great majority behind it, not only of those who vote, but of all who have votes in this country. It was a great weakness in the Scott Act that it required for its adoption only a majority of the votes cast. It would have been far better if it had required a majority of the votes of all those entitled to vote, because in some cases very little interest was taken in the elections, and the majority of the vote was not represented. The law must have a great majority behind it to be effective. It is no use placing such a law on the Statute-book by a bare majority—in fact, I would be opposed to it. While I am in favour of prohibition, I do not want a law placed on the Statute-book unless there is a great majority in favour of it. It is claimed by those who have studied the question that the great majority of the people are in favour of such a law.

I have read that extract in order to show that in 1896, when I voted in favour of prohibition, I thought as I think now. I have adopted no new views to suit the present occasion, because those were the views I held then, and I expressed them plainly. I stated that I was satisfied that if only a small vote were cast, that fact would show the people did not want prohibition. I will now read a short selection from a newspaper, which is a strong prohibition paper, the Montreal "Witness." It appears in its issue of May 13th, 1898. It seems there was a meeting of the advocates of the plebiscite, and one of the speakers was Rev. Dr. Rose, and the "Witness" endorses the stand he took on that occasion. Hon. members will see the position he took from the extract I now read, which is as follows :

The prohibition rally at Knox Church last night was an inspiring occasion. There should, however, not have been either sitting or standing room left to spare in the church. Dr. Rose said truly that the people of Canada might rest assured that they would certainly get prohibition as soon as they wanted it, plebiscite or no plebiscite. They might think they wanted it, but

when they wanted it enough to vote against their party for it ; when they were willing to risk the loss of friendship or of business rather than the loss of it ; when they were interested enough to be on hand when the question was at issue, then they would get it. If they did not want it they would not get it, plebiscite or no plebiscite. The Government only wanted to know the will of the people, and when it was assured of that it would certainly obey the mandate. We may rely upon it that politicians are watching every gauge of public opinion and drawing their conclusions, and those prohibitionists who are missing when heads are being counted cannot escape the responsibility of being to that extent counted in the negative.

That is just the view I take. If the people are in favour of prohibition, they will take the trouble to go to the polls and vote in favour of it ; if they do not want it, they will neglect to go to the polls and vote in favour of it. Unless a majority of the people expressly declare they want prohibition, it is no use for any Government to pass a prohibitory measure, and if a majority of the people do not vote in favour of it when they have the opportunity to do so, then I say that is proof they do not want it. If there is a substantial majority given in favour of adopting such a measure, then the temperance people may justly ask for a prohibitory law ; and that is where the whole question rests. If a majority vote in favour of prohibition, by giving a large majority when the poll is taken on the plebiscite, then I hold no Government should refuse to grant the temperance people such a law. I believe that, but I believe just as well that if we find a minority of the people voting in favour of prohibition, then, I believe, we will find no Government bringing in a Bill of this kind, and I would not be willing to support such a Bill under those circumstances. I approve of the plebiscite as an opportunity for the people to express their views on this question. I think it is a good thing to have the question brought to this point, and I give the Government credit for doing it at this time. Whether it is a political dodge or not I do not care. We have had this matter argued out over and over again. Some say the moment is ripe for prohibition, and some say it is not, but now we will have that question at all events settled by the plebiscite. I say, Sir, it will be settled in favour of prohibition if we find a majority of the people of this country going to the polls and recording their votes in favour of prohibition. I cannot do better than to read to the House the conclusion of that speech which I made on a previous occasion, because it expresses the sentiments which I have to day :

Let me say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to see prohibition brought about. I believe it would be of great benefit to this country, but, Sir, I want to see it done intelligently. I want people to do it with their eyes open. I want it to be done with a proper guarantee that it will be enforced. I want it to be done with